LILITH

THE INDEPENDENT JEWISH WOMEN'S MAGAZINE VOLUME 18 NO. 4

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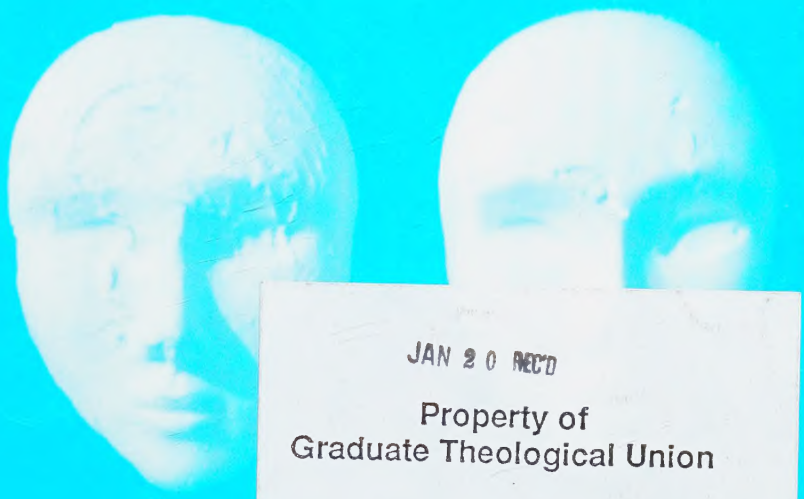

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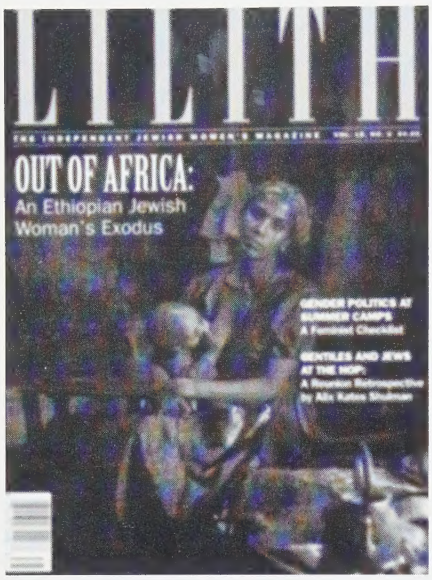

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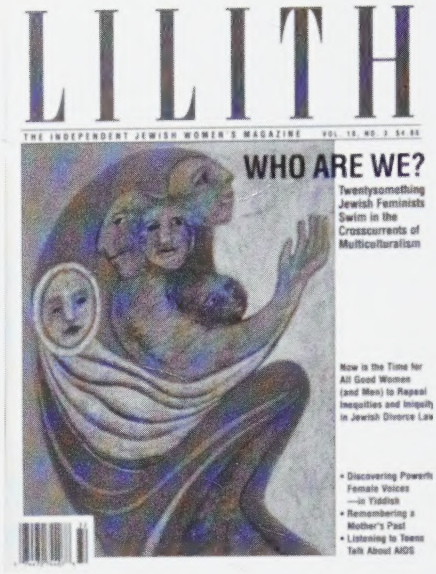
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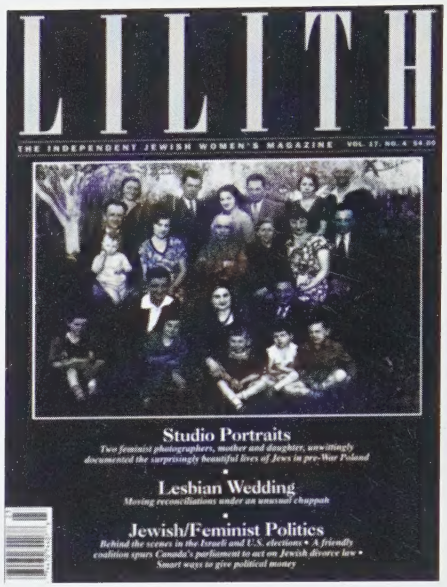
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LILITH

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cover design: Carol Richman

LILITH is named for the legendary predecessor of Eve who insisted on equality with Adam: "After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, the Holy One created a woman, also from the earth, and called her 'Lilith.' Lilith said: 'We are equal because we both come from the earth...'" (From The Alphabet of Ben Sira, 23a-b)

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For Jewish girls on a varsity junior high team at a Long Island high school, ugly stereotypes surfaced this Fall during a field hockey match. Their opponents from another school pushed them around, calling them "dirty Jews" and "JAPs." The administrators at the school with a majority of Jewish students cancelled the rest of the season's matches, telling the press that they couldn't protect their students from further abuses, since the staff at the second school neither condemned their students' actions appropriately, nor disciplined the offenders.

Why should I have been surprised when I read about this incident? I was already outraged by a *New York Times* article on the woman who, after 23 years of living in hiding, confessed to killing a Boston police officer during a 1970 bank robbery linked to efforts to stop the war in Vietnam. News coverage sought to explain the woman's bizarre acts, but one of the explanations in the *Times* was bizarre itself, reminding me of the pernicious "JAP-bashing" that LILITH described in a cover story six years ago. The *Times* associated Katherine Ann Power's crime with her exposure to what the *Times* called, in a subhead, "All Those Little Rich Girls" at Brandeis University.

Here is a portion of the letter I sent to the *Times*:

In reporting on Katherine Ann Power's confession of her role as bank robber and accomplice in a murder, your reporter suggests that Power, a former high school "homemaker" award-winner, was driven to politically motivated crime because she felt out of place at Brandeis, where she was a student in the late 60's. Power's therapist is quoted as saying that "The nuns at Marycrest [high school in Denver] gave Ms. Power a sense of duty. Then she goes off to Brandeis and there are all these little rich girls in matching outfits and she doesn't belong."'

Where does this fantasy come from? I find such a reconstruction of reality offensive for several reasons. Brandeis in the1960's (where I received my B.A. in 1965) had political activism, academic excellence, and precious few women (or men) in matching outfits.

Add to this sartorial inaccuracy the trivialization and condescension of the adjective "little," the distortion of "rich" and the disparaging "girls," and therapist Linda Carroll presents a narrative which, far from explaining the behaviors of Katherine Ann Power, diminish women in general and reinforces a pernicio stereotype.

Let us be quite frank here. Brandeis is a non-secta an university founded by Jews and supported large with Jewish funds, and it has always had a high propo tion of Jewish students. It doesn't take a great leap the imagination (nor is it paranoia) to infer from the comments "little rich Jewish girls."

One of the most persistent forms of stereotyping to link Jews with money. In contemporary life, Jewi women have become lightning rods for this bigotr particularly via the "J.A.P." stereotype. Carroll's obno ious phrase fits right in. Power's therapist—and yo reporter—have reduced to absurdity a complex time serious crime and a troubled woman through the u of unanalyzed stereotypes.

A continuing paradox of anti-Semitism is that Jew are blamed both for being the radicals and for bein the defenders of the status quo, the Communists an the capitalists, the revolutionaries and the reactionarie Brandeis becomes the crucible for Power's transform tion into a bank-robbing radical, and simultaneously th locus for her not belonging because of "all those litt rich girls."

Susan Weidman Schneider

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GUYANESE COURAGE

Reading *Red Diaper Daughter* (Summer 1992) reminded me of Janet Rosenberg Jagan, the American-born wife of the first Prime Minister of Guyana, where I was born. As Janet was white-skinned and her husband was Indian, they faced considerable racism. As communists, the couple fought the British for independence throughout my childhood.

The British government tried to turn the country against the Jagans (but the people saw the Jagans more as nationalists opposed to colonial rule than as communists), then they began a smear campaign against Mrs. Jagan, exclusively on the grounds that she was a Jew. Luckily there was no tradition of anti-Semitism in the country and the campaign came to nothing.

For me as a Jew and an African Guyanese, Janet Rosenberg Jagan is a model woman of courage, who fought with her husband for the independence of a people who were being crushed by British rule. That I received a scholarship and went to the country's best school, despite my ethnicity, I credit to the Jagan's fight for educational reforms in racist British Guyana. That, and independence, changed the life of my entire family.

MONA WILLIAMS
Writer in Residence, University of the Waikato, New Zealand

CHECKING OFF "OTHER"

I relate to Robin Beth Schaer's article, "I'm Tired of Checking Off Other" [Summer 1993]. I attend a small, liberal arts college in upstate New York. My campus has very vocal Black, Latino, gay, bisexual and women's organizations. However, the Jewish community is strangely silent. Why? Because the Jews are afraid of being labeled racists if they speak up. Jews are regarded as part of the white majority. If a Jew were to mention that she felt marginalized, the Black community would laugh and rattle off a list of successful Jews and at the same time cite the lack of successful Blacks.

Ms. Schaer is correct in asserting that multiculturalism "not only excludes Jews, but often represents Jews as an especially oppressive group." The proponents of multiculturalism need to realize that Jews are not members of the white majority. We too are a minority group. Jewish women suffer the burden of being oppressed both as women and as Jews. My generation needs to make sure that our voices are not silenced!

REBECCA WOLITZ
Poughkeepsie, NY

MORE WOMEN UNBOUND

The LILITH article "Women Unbound" [Summer 1993] described the situation in Israel of *agunot* (women whose husbands will not grant them a Jewish divorce) quite adequately. I was surprised, however, that you referred to the efforts of Sharon Shenhav, Director of Na'amat's Legal Aid Department and yet neglected to list Na'amat among those agencies assisting agunot.

Na'amat has been in the forefront of assisting women with various personal and gender-biased legal issues since its inception 68 years ago. The Legal Aid Department was formally organized following the 1967 war in recognition of the fact that families, widows and children of those killed in the war required competent professional legal advice and guidance. Today there are 26 Na'amat offices throughout Israel. Na'amat's attorneys offer legal aid to women, answer questions and give advice concerning alimony, divorce, child custody, adoption, employment, pensions, national insurance, income tax, etc. Na'amat is also active in attempting to get new legislation passed that will reduce gender bias.

BARBARA NOVICK,
Executive Director, Na'amat USA, Chicago, IL.

INSIDE/OUTSIDE

LILITH brings a lump to my throat. It makes me feel so connected, yet so distant from what appears to be the "center of things."

In early 1992, I moved to Vancouver to take up the position of Executive Director at the only Conservative congregation in the city. After 17 months, I left the position, coming to the conclusion that women's rights are often an oxymoron. I have now rejoined the Reform movement, and am home again as a woman, but having to start all over to savor the warmth and importance of being welcomed and encouraged to participate in all aspects of Jewish ritual, rather than "allowed" to participate in only some aspects.

LILITH reminds me that it should feel right to live a contemporary Jewish woman's life. I feel part of your publication, not merely a reader.

EVELYN H. LAZARE
Vancouver, Canada

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Kol Ishah

woman's voice

Traditionally, the voice of the Jewish woman was not to be heard in public, lest it arouse men. No more. These pages are for news about Jewish women, usually in their own strong voices.

"My Pain Is My Blood"

"My head hurts, maybe it's because of my tooth. My stomach also hurts, and so does my heart," bemoaned the young Ethiopian woman. The nurse at Hadassah's Center for Community Health in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Kiryat Yovel was confounded. So many complaints at the same time. She asked the patient to describe her problems in more detail. "I'm alone here. My husband died," said the woman. "My father and sisters are in Ethiopia and I long for them."

"When we first started treating Ethiopians, and they complained about pains in the heart and stomach, we took them literally," said Pnina Naveh, the clinic's Head Nurse. "Then we began to realize that they internalize all their problems and felt them as actual pains in the body. Now we have a better understanding." Avraham Yitzhak, now a medical student at Ben Gurion University, helped bridge the cultural gap between the medical staff and the Ethiopian immigrants. "I was translating from Amharic to Hebrew and back, but I was also trying to translate cultural codes," recalled Yitzhak, who completed three years at the Addis Abada Medical School before joining his parents in Israel. "If a woman said that her abdomen hurt, the doctor might suggest Maalox. In fact, the woman could really be saying that she has an infertility problem.

"When an Ethiopian says: 'I have a pain in my heart,' he doesn't usually need a cardiologist. What he is saying is that he is very sad and his heart is heavy. One patient said desperately, 'My pain is blood,'" related Yitzhak. "The belief that bad blood should be removed to cure a sickness is part of the psychological, cultural tradition," he said. In fact, Ethiopian culture views physical pain as spiritual intervention; as "punishment from God." According to Naveh, when physical pain is especially acute, it is believed that Satan or a spirit has entered the body.

"When 14,000 Ethiopian Jews arrived in Israel in Operation Solomon in 1991," continued Naveh, "we had no concept of their culture. We discovered very quickly that translating their language was not enough." In Ethiopian culture for example, it is a breach of ethics to ask direct questions. "It's simply not proper," said Naveh. Telling an Ethiopian woman she has a serious illness is also unacceptable. "One man was very angry when we told his wife that she needed an operation. The husband must be told first." Health workers found that separate group meetings for men and women on treating tuberculosis, nutrition, etc., were more successful than joint meetings. Women don't ask questions or participate in meetings with men present.

Dr. Michael Alkan, head of the Infectious Diseases Department at Soroka Hospital in Beersheva, also chairs the Association for the Advancement of the Ethiopian Family and Child (AAEFC). "In Ethiopia, there were three types of traditional healers besides the medic or doctor," said Alkan. "The herbal or folk doctor, the 'daftara' who writes amulets, and the 'zar-chaser' or 'bal-a-zar'." 'Balazar' is a combination of two Hebrew words, "possessor" and "foreign." He literally chases the evil spirit away. "Now that there is no healer or exorcist, Kupat Holim [Israel's national health fund] has to fill the role," says Alkan.

—*Sharon Kanon* (WZPS)

London: Jewish Women's Aid

London's Jewish women have successfully launched plans to establish England's first refuge for Jewish women and children who experience domestic violence. "It's one thing to tell someone that they shouldn't go outside the community for help," Jane (not her real name) told LILITH, "but having said that, it is wrong that there are no services provided within the community." Jane, a Jewish woman, a survivor, and now a member of Jewish Women's Aid (JWA), a group of over 200 women culled from all sectors of the Jewish community who have pooled their resources to support victims of domestic violence.

Since mid-1992, staffers in London's Jewish social service agencies started to share their concern informally about increased violence in Jewish homes. "Twenty-two known cases of domestic violence were identified within their current case loads, and 24 other instances over the last two-year period were cited. They estimated that 20 women would have used a refuge," explained Judith Usiskin, the founding chairperson of Jewish Women's Aid. Three hundred thousand Jews live in the U.K., with over 200,000 of them in the Greater London Area. "Additionally, a telephone help line in Leeds

for Jewish women who suffer violence had been receiving an increased number of calls from its national advertising."

In November 1992, JWA organizers held a public meeting in a large Reform Temple to gauge support for a Jewish women's refuge. Judith Usiskin reflected that, "The turnout was a surprise from women who hadn"t been to the synagogue for years, to women with *shaitels* (wigs) from Stamford Hill (the large ultra Orthodox Chassidic community) who had never been inside a Reform Temple. But they were able to talk to each other."

Phyllis Agam, a London architect, echoes this diversity. "I was also attracted by the loose hierarchy and the cross section of women lawyers, accountants, social workers, media professionals, religious and secular. We will ensure that the policies and procedures being developed are sensitive to the needs of the Orthodox women who may come to the refuge.

In June 1993, JWA was officially inaugurated, and electing officers with a clear mandate to secure funding for a permanent refuge - in the interim, a temporary refuge will open in the next few months. A free confidential telephone help line in London was launched in November 1993 to provide a "listening ear" for women and direct them to other available resources. A public education campaign is underway and JWA plans a national course to train rabbis and their partners. "Rabbis are often the first port of call for a women in distress," notes Judith Usiskin, "and they should be given the resources and training to recognize abuse and deal with it appropriately."

Esther Cohen, a probation worker in inner London, is aware that the community is scared to acknowledge any flaws in its foundation. "There are refuges for Chinese, African and Hindu women, but, at some level, English Jewry does not want to acknowledge its ethnicity. We look British, we want to be British, and we desperately want to fit in."

Jewish Women's Aid will give victims of domestic violence their own place to fit in.

For further information, contact JWA, BM JWAI, London, WC1 3XX, U.K.

—*Sally Berkovic*

Please God, Heal Her, Shaddai

Blessing Shields

Artist Leah Lynn Rosen of "Yetzirah Pottery" has created a triptych entitled, "Warzone / Blessing Shields." After losing a dear friend to breast cancer, Rosen writes that, "I thought about areas that need our blessings and protection." The breast plates memorialize the struggle against AIDS, homophobia and breast cancer.

In discussing the breast cancer shield, Rosen stated that it seemed ironic that "Shaddai," a word meaning "my breasts," whose imagery is one of nurturance and life-giving has become for so many women a place of struggle and illness.

The artist wants to honor, through her work, women's battles with breast cancer as well as other illnesses. "The breast plates should send a clear message to the medical community that women will use their collective energies to fight for recognition and repair."

Ms. Rosen includes images of ovaries, wings, and breasts in her work. She explains her use of *tzizit* in the blessing sheilds as, "a powerful meditation on God's oneness and our covenant, that can be reclaimed by Jewish women."

The shields which can be used for personal ceremony or display, can be made to honor specific people, events and rites of passage.

For more information contact: Yetzirah Pottery, 2427 A Tenth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710, (510) 204-9282.

—*Leslie Margulies*

A First: Female Rabbi Serving in Ukraine

Rabbi C. Ariel Stone, the first American liberal rabbi to accept a full time position leading a congregation in the former Soviet Union began her new assignment on September 1st.

Rabbi Stone was invited to serve Congregation HaTikvah during a visit to Moscow and Kiev last year. She was delighted with the invitation—but didn't think the congregation could afford her. When the synagogue urged the Reform movement to send a rabbi; she was the perfect match. "An offer I couldn't refuse," she says. Her duties will include travelling throughtout the Ukraine, training Jewish professionals and providing Jewish counselling and education to the entire liberal Jewish constituency (estimated to number close to 8,000) in the area. It is estimated that as many as three million Jews still live in the former Soviet Union.

"They're afraid to practice Judaism now," Rabbi Stone said, referring to the fact that for 70 years Jewish religious expression was suppressed under Communist regimes. "They want someone to tell them what to do, but I won't do that. "Instead," she said, "my goal is to break down their fears, to let them create their own Ukraine Jewishness, and teach them that they have every right to learn, feel and practice. Most of all, I'll be accessible."

Rabbi Stone was graduated magna cum laude,with a B.A. in International Studies from Emory University, ordained in 1991 from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, and has spent the last two years as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Israel in Miami, Florida.

Another First: Jewish Women Gather in Kiev

For the first time in modern history, Jewish women from around the world will gather in Kiev, Ukraine, where a five-day International Conference of Jewish Women, titled "Reconnecting for the First Time," is scheduled for May 23-27, 1994. The conference is being held in Kiev in order to reach the more than one million Jewish women remaining in the former Soviet Union, many of whom have expressed a desire to reach out globally, learn about their Jewish identity and reconnect with the Jewish birthright their mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers were forbidden to pass on to them.

The conference will feature lectures, discussion groups, films by Jewish women, workshops, exhibitions, panel presentations and more. LILITH Editor-in-Chief Susan Weidman Schneider will be one of the featured speakers, and Alice Shalvi of the Israel Women's Network will deliver the keynote address.

For more information, please contact: Project Kesher, 1134 Judson Ave., Evanston, Illinois 60202. Phone (708) 332-1994.

Kol Ishah

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF WOMEN AS CONSERVATIVE RABBIS

Adriana Grosman

TOO BAD if you missed "Women in the Rabbinate: Dynamics of Change," the Jewish Theological Seminary's celebration of the tenth anniversary of its Rabbinical School faculty's decision to ordain women as rabbis. Thirty five women rabbis (out of a total of fifty) traveled from everywhere to be there, and their presence, their individuality, their learnedness, their seriousness, their warmth and their commitment were magnificent to behold.

The two-day conference, chaired by Rabbis Nina Beth Cardin and Allan Kensky, included lectures by historians Paula Hyman (of Yale) and Jenna Weissman Joselit (of Princeton) on historic models for change; the retelling of the ten-year-old decision to ordain women by participants in that event; text studies; and panel discussions that included faculty members Anne Lapidus Lerner, recently appointed (and the first female) Vice-Chancellor of the Seminary for Public Affairs, and Judith Hauptman, Professor of Talmud. We also heard, and were inspired by, the life stories of the spiritually persevering women who have become Conservative rabbis.

"What we need to be doing is cultivating both sides of our natures," Francine Klagsbrun, who served on the Commission on the Ordination of Women, told participants at the gathering. "Male rabbis need to allow themselves to be open and accessible; female rabbis need to allow themselves to be seen as rigorous and meticulous in their scholarship, savvy about financial matters in their synagogues, strong administrators. Respect comes and will continue to come from being able to look up to the rabbi not as a social worker or therapist, but as an authority who can bring authentic, learned Jewish perspective to an issue."

In a session on women's spirituality, Rabbi Pamela Hoffman of Halifax spoke of the role of rabbi as "spiritual homemaker," inviting individuals to make themselves at home in an often unfamiliar Judaism, and how she learned to be a better *shlichat tzibur* (the prayer leader) from the singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock. Feminism, she said, had taught us the redemptive power of bringing one's own personal story to a group.

Rabbi Debra Cantor of Brooklyn told us that female rabbis may need to defend themselves against the expectation that they be superwomen. "Our calling, however lofty," she warned, "does not demand that we sacrifice our lives in the process of serving God and Israel. Self-destruction, the neglect of family and friends, workaholism, these are pernicious late-twentieth-century American values. They are not Jewish values."

The feeling of elation most participants felt at this historic gathering peaked at a candle-lighting ceremony led by Rabbi Lori Forman celebrating women in the many roles they serve the Jewish community — as rabbis, teachers, principals, scholars, counselors, and chaplains. It was followed, roller coaster fashion, by the dismay that swept over the assembly an hour later during a panel on "The Contours of Pluralism within the Conservative Movement," where Rabbis Joel Roth and David Feldman shared their regrets that in the process of enfranchising women at the seminary those who opposed the decision on halachic (Jewish legal) grounds were made to feel unwelcome. Both men suggested that the Seminary and the Conservative movement were "deeply impoverished" by the eventual departure of these opponents. Rabbi Feldman said he could not accept "the way that the Halachic process had been broken."

Rabbi Debra Newman Kamin clearly spoke for many when she stood and expressed her outrage at being invited to a conference only to be categorically delegitimized by these speakers. "We women (who wanted to be) rabbis stayed with the movement when they disagreed with us. Why can't those who disagreed with this decision stick it out too?" asked Rabbi Nina Bieber Feinstein of Los Angeles. Tikva Frymer-Kensky, on the faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, responded to a question about allowing women to be witnesses for ritual purposes (such as weddings) by suggesting that since Roth felt the Conservative Committee on Jewish Law and Standards would not be able to muster the authority to do so for some time, a body of women should designate itself as authorized to make the necessary *takanah* (correction) to the biblical injunction.

In the final session, on "Ministry for the Next Generation," Myrna Matza, a rabbinical student, spoke of bringing together Jews "in recovery." Every synagogue, she said, should have a bottle of grape juice on the kiddush table to let adults recovering from alcoholism know they are welcome.

Significant and uplifting, at this conference, were many moments of singing together. Over and over, speakers said that feminism has changed the Seminary and it will never be the same. A few lamented this; others only pray that the momentum will continue.

(The proceedings of the conference will be published in installments in *Conservative Judaism*, a publication of the Rabbinical Assembly, 3080 Broadway, New York, NY 10027.)

—*Naomi Danis*

WOMEN CANTORS CELEBRATE SCHOLARSHIP AND SONG

The Women Cantors Network (WCN) was founded in 1982 by Debbie Katchko-Zimmerman to provide a support group for what was then a small minority of women cantors working in the Conservative movement. This group recently presented an exceptionally varied three-day conference at Gratz College in Philadelphia, in which I participated.Over 40 women attended, from as far as Texas. The sound of 40 trained women's voices chanting *Birkat HaMazon* together is probably as close as one can get in this life to the sound of angels.

At this conference, it was not only the voices that blended; it was the spirits and the minds. This group is unfortunately too often regarded as a poor stepchild by full members of the ACC (American Conference of Cantors) or CA (Cantors Assembly). Yet many members of WCN are themselves full or associate members of those "official" organizations who choose to support the WCN because bonding and networking in a small, intimate group like this does not exist at larger and more impersonal conferences.

Historically, cantors learned their trade by growing up with a role model (a male cantor, in the past) and apprenticing to that role model. Schools for both the Reform and Conservative movements were first established only in the 1940's. Therefore they are a very recent innovation, and the division they have created between "official" and "unofficial" cantors is largely artificial. Many WCN members learned their skills the traditional way, from cantors who served as their mentors. Many work in the Conservative movement and have gained respect in their communities for their knowledge and professionalism.

Yet support for the WCN even among women cantors is not universal. A friend of mine asked a woman cantor if she was a member of the WCN; the cantor responded "No—most of their members are not certified." Such a caste system does exist within the cantorate.

This "fringe group"'s most recent conference included Rabbis Linda Holtzman and Marcia Prager, Dr. Ellen Frankel, Dr. Herb Levine, and Dr. Marsha Bryan Edelman. Along with tremendous diversity in subject matter and approach, a high level of technical knowledge and total professionalism was evident in all of their presentations.

Rabbi Holtzman, the first presenter, is a 1979 graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where she is currently the Director of Practical Rabbinics. Rabbi Holtzman has a long-time involvement with Beth Ahavah, Philadelphia's gay and lesbian outreach congregation. Her topic was "Inclusiveness throughout the Life Cycle," and dealt with ways of including the gay and lesbian community in a synagogue's life-cycle celebrations. The hope was that we as cantors could bring back fresh ideas to our rabbis and congregations that might move them in new directions.

Participants asked numerous questions about Rabbi Holtzman's personal situation; how do she and her partner parent their two children? What do the children call them? Cantors mentioned cases of being asked to officiate at commitment ceremonies where their rabbis would or would not cooperate. One woman said she didn't understand why couldn't gay or lesbian couples simply join a synagogue and keep quiet about it? Rabbi Holtzman explained that in her own situation, she and her partner simply wanted to join a synagogue, with their two sons, as a family. They never wanted to "make a big deal." But the rabbi had to take their request to a board, which had to decide whether to accept them as a family unit.

In this as in any women's group, a certain percentage of members are lesbians. There had not been any open dialogue between the lesbian and straight women of WCN in the past; in fact, there has been some friction and paranoia, keeping most lesbian members in the closet. But as this session progressed, some of the women began to speak more openly of their lives than they had previously.

Several cantors mentioned that their congregations have formed a gay Havurah, which is not restricted to gay members but is at least a place they can feel safe while still belonging to the larger synagogue community. Maybe this will become popular as a solution to the sense of isolation now suffered by many gay and lesbian Jews.

Rabbi Holtzman also proposed that a book similar in concept to *Heather Has Two Mommies* needs to be written for the Jewish community. Children in Hebrew school are bombarded with messages and pictures of "traditional" Jewish families. Much has been done to make texts more egalitarian; few texts now show *Abba* walking in the door with a briefcase while *Ima* is baking Challah. Yet Hebrew books with references to gay and lesbian families do not exist; there are no texts featuring *Ima* and *Ima*, for example. Thus children in these families feel completely alienated while sitting in their Hebrew school classrooms.

In the evening, well-known composer and cantor of Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park (Pennsylvania), Dr. Charles Davidson, held a music-sharing session. He surprised us with a new piece, a congregational Sim Shalom, dedicated to the WCN on the occasion of this conference.

There is much interest among WCN members in certification programs. Though members never ask one another "Did you graduate from a cantorial school?" or "Where did you get your certification?" nonetheless all are aware of the value of that piece of paper in the wider synagogue community.

There was some grumbling from the group when it was explained that certification involves taking a lengthy exam and a fee of $300 is required to obtain the syllabus ahead of time and for the exam itself. Debbie Katchko-Zimmerman jumped to her feet and proclaimed that the time is ripe for women to enter the Conservative Cantors Assembly. She and fellow member Beth Weiner went on to tell us how the two of them passed the certification test this past spring.

Debbie Katchko-Zimmerman learned *hazzanut* from her father, Cantor Theodore Katchko, who in his turn had studied with his father, renowned Cantor Adolph Katchko, whose liturgical compositions form the backbone of the cantorial school curriculum. At the 1993 CA Convention, a workshop featuring Katchko's compositions was scheduled. Debbie asked permission to sing some of those compositions, since she had literally learned them from the source. The organizers told her "Sorry, you're not a member so you can't sing." Exasperated at running up against this wall every year, Debbie decided on the spot to become a member, by taking the exam that can be requested at any CA Convention (in marked contrast to the Reform movement's more formal procedure). Beth agreed to study and prepare together with Debbie, and to attempt the exam herself.

This WCN conference highlighted the tremendous resources we as professional Jewish women possess in our ranks. We are not only liturgically skilled, but we reflect a tremendous musical diversity. We value pluralism and we're united by our mutual supportiveness and common purpose.

The next Women's Cantors Network Conference will be held on Sunday, May 22 thru Tuesday, May 24, 1994 in Mount Vernon, NY. For more information call Cantor Doris Cohen at (718) 291-3089.

— *Cantor Helen Leneman*
Kol Ishah *continued on page 34*

WHEN THE GODDESS CALLS

Jewish Women Answer *by Rahel Musleah*

Pregnant snake goddess, Cyprus, 4000 B.C.E.

Debbie Goldberg, 50, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, a respected internist, and a member of Conservative congregation Tifereth Israel in Washington, D.C., sports a bumper sticker on her car that reads, "Witches heal."

"For me, the tradition of witches is one of powerful, imaginative women whose healing abilities extend beyond the boundaries of rational, cognitive medicine," she explains. "Witches use herbs knowledgeably, and create special atmospheres and rituals that allow people to imagine change in their lives, that support people positively, and that direct people's energy into healing themselves."

While Goldberg does not belong to a coven, she seeks to better understand witchcraft. Describing her current religious life, she says, "I'm largely a non-observant Jew looking for a niche."

For Jews to whom the terms "pagan" and "witch" seem antithetical to Judaism—even abhorrent, given the numerous biblical warnings against polytheism and witchcraft—Jewish witches and Pagans may appear bizarre, cultic, kooky. Yet more and more Jews, nourished by the feminist movement, are not only donning the dual labels, but finding similarities between the two traditions.

Ruth Barrett, 40, a professional singer and fretted dulcimer player, sings in the High Holiday choir at Congregation Kehillath Israel in Pacific Palisades, California, where her father, Milton Bienenstock, is cantor emeritus. The Bienenstocks are among the founding families of the Reconstructionist movement. Barrett is also a Wiccan priestess of the Circle of Aradia, a legally incorporated religious "congregation" that is for women only. Barrett teaches magic, spell-craft and conflict-resolution workshops at colleges, women's music festivals, and spirituality conferences. "I teach psychic development," she says. "ways to work with energy, through ecstatic dancing, chanting and visualization, with the purpose of bringing about desired goals. These goals might be looking for a new job, ending patriarchy, or just having a situation go the way you want it to go, while always honoring free will and the greater good of all."

Barrett and her music partner, Cyntia Smith, have brought out six albums of Earth-based spirituality music, original Goddess songs, and instrumentals, and they give concerts at feminist spiritual gatherings including the International Goddess Festival held in May in Santa Cruz. Their newest album, *The Heart Is The Only Nation* is available through Ladyslipper, 800-634-6044.

Barrett's daughter, Amanda, became bat mitzvah two years ago; at 15 she still attends Hebrew School.

Margot Adler, currently a reporter for National Public Radio, was 12 when she first immersed herself in Greek mythology and felt as if she had returned to her "true homeland." Raised in a non-religious Jewish home, the granddaughter of renowned psychiatrist Alfred Adler, her childhood heroes were Artemis and Athena. Not until adulthood did she fulfill her childhood wish of becoming a witch and a Goddess-worshipper.

Adler, Barrett and Goldberg mirror the spectrum of Jewish women who find spiritual appeal in the various (not always well-differentiated) forms of Paganism—neo-Paganism, witchcraft (called Wicca), and Goddess spirituality. Though there are no statistics on how many Jews have embraced Paganism, anecdotal evidence indicates that its holistic, feminist, earthy, empowering, personal, creative, alternative beliefs and practices resonate deeply for thousands of Jewish women and men, both those who have been drawn out of Jewish religious practice as well as those who continue to practice Judaism in more conventional ways. At any given Earth-spirituality gathering on East or West Coast, Jewish faces and names are strongly in evidence.

Many well-known Pagan writers and leaders are brainy, sensitive, funny, impressive Jewish women—Adler, Starhawk, Deena Metzger and Marion Weinstein, to name just a few. Some Jewish women who have turned to Paganism seem to be frustrated rabbis, born too soon, who saw no option for a feminine-centered cosmology within the Judaism of their generation.

Because Paganism celebrates individuality, urging its members to create their own rituals and theology, it is difficult to provide formal definitions of the religion. There are some basics, however: Mind can mold matter; all events are generally meaningful, and chance does not really exist.

In her comprehensive overview of Paganism, *Drawing Down the Moon* (Viking, 1979), Adler defines a Pagan as a member of a polytheistic, tribal, nature

religion. The Latin term Pagan, which simply means "of the country," stems from the history of Christianity, whose first converts were city dwellers. "People in the countryside never got the news," Adler says. A witch, she explains, is an initiate of the religion called Wicca, a pre-Christian nature religion that worships Goddesses (one or many), and sometimes Gods.

"We have what we call a 'Web of Life' consciousness," explains Ruth Barrett, "an understanding that everything in life is connected to everything else. This is feminism's strength, too. Everything we do or don't do has an effect, a kind of spiritual amplification of the '60s idea that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem.

"Witches believe that everyone has a psychic vote, and we learn how to use that vote through rituals, through utilizing and directing power Being a witch means being active in the world. It means being as conscious as possible, in our personal interactions, our politics, everything. We can't end the problems of child abuse or rape, for example, because these institutions are co-created by society as a whole, but we can add our energies towards changing these problems."

Paganism's feminist and environmental emphasis appeals both to people alienated from the patriarchal religions in which they were raised, and to those who feel a critical need to reconnect with the earth.

The Pagan world view, Adler writes, does not separate the animate and the inanimate, or divide the divine, the human, and nature. "The subversive core of Paganism is that we are the Gods," Adler explains. "We have the Goddess within us. That's very powerful, especially for women who have felt they are nothing and their bodies are nothing. The ground of the sacred is here and now. You don't have to die to get to the good stuff."

Adler admits that her interpretation of the immanence of the Goddess is metaphorical and therapeutic. Others have a more literal understanding of the concept.

"I feel that the divine is present in the tree, and in the star, and in the wolf, as present there as in the human," says writer Deena Metzger, well-known as the nude woman on the post-mastectomy poster who poses sporting a tattoo of a tree on her chest. "And if you can imagine that the divine lives in the tree, you can imagine it lives in women. Because of this perception of an inspirited world, I have been met by Pagan thought.

"That's a place where Judaism doesn't feed me," she adds. "Recent attempts to bring nature back into Judaism feel liberal to me, but not profound, because I don't know anyone yet in Judaism who says the tree, the person, the animal and the bird are simply variations of eachother and of the divine."

"For me," adds Adler, "Paganism is a way to get the juice and mystery of ecstatic religious tradition, without taking on dogma. Just because you dance and sing for five hours straight doesn't mean that you lose your integrity as a rational being. Why can't one dance and chant and drum in total ecstasy, and then wake up the next morning and be a computer programmer? You can live in different realities at the same time."

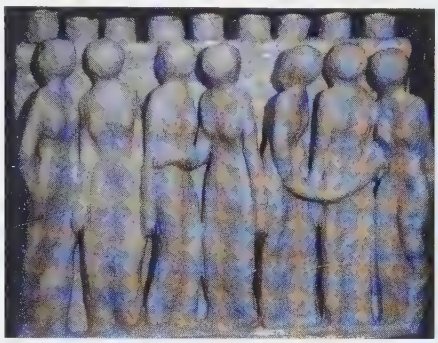
Take, for example, a ritual Starhawk describes in *The Spiral Dance*, the best-selling introduction to witchcraft first published by HarperCollins in 1979 and revised ten years later:

"The moon is full. We meet on a hilltop that looks out over the bay . . . . The night is enchanted. Our candles have been blown out [by the wind] and our makeshift altar cannot stand up under the force of the [gale] as it sings through the branches of tall

THE GREAT GODDESS IN ELSIE GOLDSTEIN

by Susan Schnur

Marija Gimbutas' radicalizing archeological-mythological work [The Language of the Goddess: Unearthing the Hidden Symbols of Western Civilization] plunges readers back 9000 years to various Goddess-worshipping, gynocentric, peace-loving cultures that lasted, Gimbutas argues, for over 4500 years. Reviewing thousands of archeological artifacts—particularly ubiquitous female statuettes from farming cultures in southeastern Europe from 6500 B.C.E. on—Gimbutas reconstructs early cultures that rested upon " a life-affirming, profoundly organic world-view that locates the Goddess within each individual and within all things in nature," as opposed to the male God who is largely conceptualized as transcendent; whose location is a distant heaven.



Womenorah by Elsie Goldstein

Over the last few years, a virtual Goddess cottage industry has sprung up around Gimbutas', and other archeologists', finds. Many small, lively businesses are crafting replicas of ancient female figurines—a pocket-sized pewter Goddess of Willendorf (c. 30,000 B.C.E), a ceramic Cucuteni bird Goddess , or a Celtic Sheela Na Gig in bonded stone.

Cut for a moment to Elsie Goldstein, a 78-year-old, strongly identified Jewish secularist/political leftist and Gray Panther from Evanston, Illinois, who knows nothing about Marija Gimbutas, the Goddess-figurine cottage industry, or the women's Pagan revival. Nevertheless, for nine years, she has been moved to create clay female figurines of religious significance–holding Hanukkah candles, adorning seder plates, as Sabbath candlesticks.

Let's listen to Elsie, and then ponder the continuum: the connection between Goldstein's naif folk art, her "graven images" which resonate for many Jewish women, and theologian Carol Christ's comment that, "Not until I said Goddess did I realize that I had never felt fully included as woman in masculine or neuterized imagery for divinity."

Elsie:"Women buy these female figures, like my Hanukkah Womenorahs, and then they tell me their personal stories. An Orthodox woman told me she had been sexually abused by her father when she was a child, and she used to pray each night not to wake up the next day. When she did wake up each morning, it confirmed for her that there was no God. She used her Womenorah in therapy; she said it helped her know that it was all right to be a woman and a Jew.

"What got me started was all this Jewish art of Chassidic men. I saw a menorah of these male figures, and that got me mad. Everywhere I looked, there's these damn males taking over. The male menorahs clinched it for me: enough already!

"What I like about some of my female figures is that they are free-standing, you can move them around to relate to each other. My women touch each other, they hug, they look. This is what women have to offer: we relate: like Carol Gilligan says, we're socialized to think of one another, to connect.

"Many years ago I read Robert Graves. It made sense to me that life and death revolved around Goddesses; people didn't know about the male role in procreation. I always liked the primitive Goddesses—they're emotional, less contained, less rational. These are compliments.

"My husband and I just returned from a trip to Greece, to the Temple of Isis, the island of Delos. So I'm in Macedonia sitting on a 3500-year-old marble bench—you feel you're back in time—the fact that there was such a different time, it's transporting. I'm posing for Sol to take a picture, and two or three young people go by, and they bow

to me. We were all transported.

"I saw the worship of the Goddess, and I translate it into the worship of a woman. Not that we should be worshipped especially, but it's appropriate that women be among those who are worshipped.

"I charge $175 for a Womenorah, and I feel guilty about it; it's a lot of money. But my women are very time-consuming, and people are meshugeneh, they pay, because, I guess, these figures seem to say something deep. Sometimes I have to throw away a figurine because there is no way to repair Her. What feelings that provokes for me! And so I throw it out quickly because I feel upset, squeamish." [To order from Elsie Goldstein, call her at 708-869-6429; an order takes three months to fulfill.]

What happens to the consciousness of Jewish women when we begin to wonder whether our spiritual-mythological history begins not only with our Jewish ancestors Sarah and Abraham (whose Hebrew followers were, after all, part of an Indo-European patriarchal, pastoral, mobile, war-oriented larger culture that worshipped male deities), but also with a culture (matrifocal, agricultural, sedentary, peaceful, egalitarian) that is perhaps five or six thousand years older than our Jewish one, wherein the Goddess Creatrix is posited to have been worshipped as the central divinity?

What happens to our consciousness when over three-quarters of Western history is newly potentially constructible as essentially feminine? When the hoary Hebrew calendar year 5754 seems suddenly to represent a fairly brief stint?

What happens to someone like Elsie Goldstein, committed secular Jewish septuagenarian, when she formally meets up with the feminist energy that's been generated in Gimbutas-like circles? When she holds in her yiddishe hant her first reproduction Neolithic Cucuteni bird Goddess carrying the mature eggs of creation in her buttocks, and is enthralled?

When patriarchy seems no longer Western history's absolute norm—but rather a lost weekend?

eucalyptus. We hold up our arms and let the wind hurl against our faces. We are exhilarated, hair and eyes streaming. The tools are unimportant; we have all we need to make magic: our bodies, our breath, our voices, each other...."One by one, we will step into the center of the circle. We will hear our names chanted... and remember: 'I am Goddess. You are God, Goddess. All that lives, breathes, loves, sings in the un-ending harmony of being is divine.'"

While rituals can be dramatic outdoor events full of drumming, dancing and chanting, they don't have to be. The Circle of Aradia rents community centers or churches for its seasonal gatherings, since its outdoor rituals drew too much unwelcome interruption. Covens often meet in homes. Wherever rituals take place, however, they include several steps: a purification of space by casting a circle; purification of self, such as being anointed with a mixture of salt and water; honoring the four directions—earth, water, fire and air, and the spirit that holds them together; a welcoming of Goddess and/or God; and eating, drinking and socializing. The goal is a religious experience that alters one's consciousness.

Despite Paganism's belief in individuality, it is not without rules. Wicca, especially, has more formal boundaries than other forms of Paganism. The Wiccan code of ethics states, "You shall harm none and manipulate no others against their will." But as Paganism comes of age, it is has not yet confronted the implications of its theological positions. It has not taken a stand on issues such as abortion, nor has it organized soup kitchens and halfway houses, according to Adler (who now, by the way, worships alone because of her busy professional schedule).

Lilith, 2300 B.C., Middle East

Wiccans are organized by covens, autonomous havurah-like groups traditionally limited to thirteen people who do spiritual work together. Thirteen, the number of lunations in a year, is a sacred number for witches. Often participants take turns being priest or priestess, which simply means leading the ritual.

One of the best ways to understand what attracts many Jews to Paganism is to listen to their stories of searching and epiphany, most that began in childhood and adolescence.

Penny Novack was raised in the Midwest as a Southern Baptist, began her spiritual quest at the age of 12, converted to Judaism at 35, still keeps kosher, belongs to a synagogue in Massachusetts, is a member of a Rosh Hodesh group, and is a Pagan.

In 1968, she says, at the age of 27, she had "an argument with God," in which she felt at a dead-end with a God whose image was male. In order to grow religiously, she felt she needed, "a God imaged as female as strongly as a God imaged as male."

Today, she characterizes her open-house community celebrations as "disorganized, gregarious fellowships" that she shares with her Jewish husband, Michael, her children, who have been raised Pagan, and a circle of friends that can number from fifteen to fifty.

Despite Jewish feminist reinterpretations of God as Goddess, "for most Jews, 'Goddess' is a political statement rather than one that comes from the joy of perceiving deity," Novack says.

Len Rosenberg, on the other hand, often drew pictures, as a boy, of a male God standing beside "His wife, whom I called Mother Nature." Later, when he attended folkshule, he found the image of the Sabbath Bride enchanting. Today he practices Hinduism and Paganism, but still considers himself ethnically Jewish.

"If I pass a mezuzah on a door, I reflexively reach up to kiss it," he says. "Those are my roots. I can't cut them off."

As a child, Marion Weinstein dressed her dolls up as witches, watched TV ministers, requested lessons in kabbalah, and studied religion on her own. "I started questioning the whole structure of deity at age 13," recalls Weinstein, a witch who for fourteen years hosted a radio show on WBAI in New York, called Marion's Cauldron, in which she interviewed occult experts, taught occult techniques, conducted group rituals and discussed topic such as psychic phenomena, dream research and witchcraft.

"If you're going to identify with a deity that doesn't look like you in any way, then you're not going to feel personally connected," Weinstein says. "But if the deity looks like you

Pagans celebrate Eight Sabbats, or holidays: Winter Solstice (Dec. 20-23); Candlemas (Feb. 2), harbinger of spring; Spring Equinox (March 20-23); Beltane (May 1), honoring the flowering and fertility of the Goddess; Summer Solstice (June 20-23); Lammas (August 3), the first harvest; Autumnal Equinox (Sept. 20-23), and Halloween, or Samhain (Oct. 31).

and sounds like you and reminds you of your mother and grandmother, then all the beauty and magic of the 'Creatrix' will be yours automatically. You are a microcosm of deity."

Born Miriam Simos, Wiccan leader and author Starhawk absorbed Judaism from her religious grandparents, and continued her Jewish education through Hebrew high school and Camp Ramah. "As I reached young womanhood, I sensed that the tradition as it stood then was somehow lacking in models for me as a woman," she writes in *The Spiral Dance*. At 17, she hitchhiked up and down the California coast, began feeling connected with nature in a new way, but didn't know how to "name" her feelings yet.

She adopted the name Starhawk after she dreamed of a hawk flying across the sky in a universe that shimmered and split to reveal an underlying shining pattern. "The hawk swooped down and turned into an old woman. I felt I was under her protection," Starhawk recalls.

These stories mirror the needs many Jewish Pagans feel are, or were, unanswered in Judaism. To fill those needs, Pagans are eclectic, absorbing everything from Greek religion and Native American thought to Buddhism. And, though frequently raised in secular Jewish homes, many Pagans hang on to Judaism, finding a deep-rooted sense of Jewishness impossible to dismiss. New Moon New York, a Pagan networking organization, does not schedule events on Jewish holidays because many of its participants observe them, says the group's program coordinator, Nan Alexander.

In fact, Jewish Pagans say there is much the two traditions share: Both are ancient, tribal religions; both stress ethics and a connection to the land, both celebrate lunar cycles and seasonal holidays, both emphasize community; neither proselytizes

The number of Jews in Paganism reflects Judaism's lack of dogma as well as the American emphasis on individualism that encourages choice instead of obligation in religion, says Rabbi Jane Littman of Congregation Kol Simcha in Laguna Beach, California. "It also speaks to the abysmal Jewish education that took place a generation ago. If Jews had been educated better, there wouldn't be so many Jews who are Buddhists, Wiccans, unattached or hostile to Judaism. Today, many Jewish institutions are working towards this issue."

Littman points out that the concept of harmony with the earth is organic to Judaism. "Our entire holiday cycle has to do with the harvest and lunar phenomena," she says. "Sukkot is the full moon after the equinox. Passover is the full moon after the equinox. Tu B'Shvat is when the trees bud."

Deena Metzger, who celebrates holidays such as Passover and Hanukkah, says Judaism gave her an ethical, moral and political consciousness, but did not "take" her "to spirit." It took her, instead, to law. She describes herself as very observant, but not in the prescribed ways or time-bound moments. When she lights candles, she says, she always remembers the Sabbath candles and what they mean. Yet she does not always light candles on Friday night at sundown. "I practice the idea of the Sabbath all the time," she says. "It might be tonight. It might be tomorrow night. It might be an hour in a day. The Sabbath is the most profound offering of Judaism." Does Metzger say the traditional Jewish candle lighting blessing? "Only if I light candles on a Friday night," she explains.

Goddess in Garden with Tree by Monica S¸öö

When Ruth Barrett's daughter Amanda became bat mitzvah last year, Ruthread the Torah blessings, but altered them: "*Brucha at Shekhina, Malkat ha-olam . . .*"[Blessed are You, Shekhina, Queen of the Universe]. Her daughter recited the traditional words: "*Baruch ata Adonay, eloheinu melech ha-olam . . .*" [Blessed are You, King of the Universe].

For Judy Harrow, a 48-year-old Manhattan civil servant and coven leader, Jewish identity is a complex, painful issue. Raised in a non-observant home in the Bronx, on the same block as her religious, Yiddish-speaking grandparents and surrounded by Holocaust survivors, Harrow says that when she first found a religious community that expressed her values better—Paganism—she tried to close the door on being Jewish. Disturbed by the example of Jews for Jesus, who tried to "have it both ways" by remaining simultaneously Jewish and Christian, she felt that if she couldn't practice Judaism normatively, she didn't have the right to call herself Jewish.

Over the last five years, however, Harrow explains that, "I can't turn my Jewish side off," though she allows that her polytheistic vision arguably excludes her from being normatively Jewish.

"When you cannot adhere to the *Shema*—that Adonai is One—that's really it," she says. "I was at a Friday night dinner at a friend's house where everyone sat around debating whether or not I'm Jewish. It all depends on what you mean by 'Jewish.' Am I a monotheist?

"Long long ago, in the time before remembering..."

by Susan Schnur

Every decade or so, a cultural classic comes along that establishes a new developmental benchmark for feminism. *Free to Be You and Me* was one. New England-based storyteller Jay Goldspinner's work is among the new classics, that seem to be springing Athena-like from the profoundly transformative gynocentrism that defines the women's spirituality movement.

On her quiet, powerful audiotape [Rootwomen Stories, $12, available through Jay Goldspinner, 56 Orchard St., Greenfield, MA 01301, 413-773-8033], Goldspinner tells a broad, inclusive range of deeply-felt tales: from Lilith (who turns herself into "a most magnificent dragon"); to the Irish Peggy O'Donal (who thinks, like many women, that she has no stories to tell and no songs to sing); to Betsy Bell and Mary Gray, two 18th- century English sweethearts (one a healer; the other a gardener/cook) who share a bed in a simple thatched cottage, and die nursing others through a plague.

"I wasn't always a woman-loving Wiccan," says Goldspinner, who, at 62, describes herself as a Goddess-follower and witch. "Once I led a conventional—well, semi-conventional—life. When I gave that up, I lost a lot: marriage, family, children, regular job. There was a lot of pain to it."

Goldspinner's tales, stemming as they do from the storyteller's deep internalization of a social script that was written by women instead of men, posit, indeed, a different understanding of what the world is about: It is holistic, nature-loving, embedded in a really ancient past (millenia before Eve). Lilith becomes, for example, not a feminist tale of re-visioning, but the warm and newly retrieved original—the long-awaited replacement for the Adam-and-Eve counterfeit with which we've lived for so long. .

When Lilith is banished from Eden, she finds "that life in the desert was hard, but she could survive, and it was beautiful. When the flowers bloomed, it was fragrant. And she flew over the land, and she watched the moon, and she swam in the sea, and she bore children—the Seraphim, those women with wings and songs, they were her children; and the wise and mighty Sphinx who still sits in the desert, she was her daughter; and the great tall cedars of

Lebanon, they were also her children."

Such aesthetic and moral perfect pitch as Goldspinner's speaks to a coming-of-age of cultural feminism. The women's spirituality movement, for example, does not feel that it is inventing itself (a process that requires brassy music), but rather that it is practicing the craft of retrieval—a procedure bolstered by an emotionally entitled sense of legacy. Generally, retrieval affords practitioners more self-assurance than does invention (and consequently often leads to better art). If Gaian feminists are not just "making things up," as it were, but rather carefully brushing the sand off neglected artifacts (and stories) that have been there all along, it's a process (less scary, more self-affirming) that brings one into a more companionate relationship with the Muse.

So how did someone like Goldspinner enter the magickal [sic] world of storytelling? "Obviously through my mastectomy in the 1960's," she explains good-naturedly. "Some time after my operation, I read that Amazons were one-breasted in order to prove that they didn't need men—that they were complete in themselves. And this was a profound, life-saving reinterpretation for me. I then found myself wanting to read stories about Goddesses, but they were impossible to find. Stories about women are generally twisted, and put us in a bad light. If we're powerful in the stories, we're also evil. So then I thought, 'Well, if I want to hear these stories, I'll have to tell them myself.'".

Absolutely not. Am I ethnically Jewish, do I support the Zionist cause? Absolutely yes."

Harrow's personal experience convinced her of witchcraft's healing powers. In 1979, she was diagnosed with cancer. A group of friends cast a circle, and chanted until they had created a high level of emotional intensity, focusing it all on her. The malignancy disappeared and has not recurred. "Visualization and other techniques can influence the immune system," she says. "So much of disease has a stress-related component. Why not work with the mind and release that component to make space for healing?"

She is passionate, too, about Earth spirituality. "Look at Mother Nature," she says. "She may not be the center of your life, but She is in need; she is in pain; she is in danger. Whether or not you worship Her, you live off Her, and your life is dependent on Her life.

"The monotheistic model," Harrow adds, "gets humanity in trouble. Any one face of God is inherently oppressive. If God is male, women are left out. If God is female, men are left out. If God is old, children are left out. If God is Athena, Aphrodite is left out. From one God to one way is a step people make easily."

For Starhawk, the recent death of her mother helped her to focus some conflicted feelings about Judaism. At services in the synagogue, Starhawk says, "Over and over I found myself emotionally comforted by the music, the atmosphere, the people—as long as I ignored what the words actually meant. But I understand the Hebrew, so I found myself split.

"I said the Shema with my mother on her deathbed, and there was that powerful connection with all our ancestors. Yet that prayer just doesn't work for me."

Not all Pagans are polytheistic. "When people ask, 'Is Goddess religion polytheistic or monotheistic?,' I just answer, 'Yes,'" laughs Ruth Barrett. "So for me, there's no conflict between Paganism and Judaism. The Goddesses in their various guises are parts of a whole. There's a completeness that IS the Goddess, and there are also different Goddesses that embody different aspects of Her. It's similar to Nature: there is rain, fire, wind, water—yet the larger context is Nature, and within Her are individual archetypal energies. "If I weren't attached to female metaphors my concept of Goddess would fit really well into Reconstructionism, which views God as the force in the universe that creates and that is inherent in everything.""There is enormous flexibility in Judaism as to how to interpret the belief in one God," Rabbi Jane Littman notes. "We call God 'El Shaddai,' 'El Elyon,' 'Elohim,''Adonai,' 'Shekhina.' Does that mean we have five different Gods? No. Those are all aspects of the divinity. What we don't use is Hecate, because she is not part of our cultural inheritance."

Tikva Frymer-Kensky, professor at the Reconstruct-ionist Rabbinical College, scholar of Near Eastern religions and author of *In the Wake of the Goddesses* (Free Press, 1992), adds that Judaism speaks about God in non-gendered metaphors such as 'Rock' or 'Living Waters.' But because of social patriarchy, she explains, Judaism chose to emphasize the power metaphors which are male—Master, Father, King.

Some Pagans have tried to formally integrate Judaism and Paganism. Penny Novack founded the Jewish Pagan Network, an attempt to help Jewish Pagans look at the religion of their birth in the light of Paganism. After three years, two Sabbath study gatherings (which drew about ten people), and many calls and letters, Novack gave up. "They didn't want the two parts of their lives brought together," she concludes.

Novack is wistful about her search to meld her two religious impulses, expressing a desire to increase her Jewish observance. "I try not to be schizophrenic about being both Jewish and Pagan, but I find myself alone a great deal of the time," she says.

Her sensitive vision of Judaism, rooted in the sacredness of nature, leads her to compare Torah to beautiful natural sites, like Shelburne Falls (near her home in Massachusetts), a volcanic dome with awe-inspiring formations: "That place has a feeling of time, history, beauty. I experience Judaism as being like that dome." When Novack lights Sabbath candles, she visualizes women everywhere lighting at the same time, starting a wave of light that goes all the way around the world.

Novack's efforts spurred Steve Posch, a 37-year-old writer, actor and storyteller, to co-found a Pagan congregation in Minneapolis called Beit Asherah, or The Golden Calf Synagogue. "It's in your face," Posch comments about the name, "but it's intended to be playful, like, 'there, we've broken the final taboo.'"

Sabbath and holiday celebrations attract between ten and 25 people to parks, "temples" in private homes, or wherever the congregation chooses. "We get together and speak the same language," Posch says.

At their "Return of the Goddess Seder," traditional Jewish songs and neo-Pagan chants blend. "We eat the bitter herbs and remember the coming of patriarchy," Posch says. "We improvise the Cursing of the Patriarchy instead of reciting the Ten Plagues."

Men and patriarchy are not synonymous, says Posch, adding that as a gay man he feels more comfortable in a matriarchal culture with Goddess imagery.

He admits that his group probably seems "scary and threatening" to mainstream Jews. "We're redefining Jewishness for ourselves in a way that seems to have been excluded as a possibility by tradition. We are flying in the face of centuries of self-definition, you know how un-comfortable people get when you change their definitions."

Goddess spirituality may not affect a majority of mainstream Jewish women, but it is definitely creeping into non-traditional Jewish circles which are committed to breaking ground in feminist liturgy. Janet Carnay is a member of Shabbat Shenit, a group of women (including rabbis and cantors) in the Los Angeles area who meet once a month, taking turns at crafting services which, though rooted in traditional forms such as the Amidah, are experimental

and innovative.

"We cast a circle to create sacred space," Carnay says. "We invoke Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. Each time we say the Shema, it's different." She offers an example: "Listen, Sisters, We're All Part of Godd/ss, and We All are One." According to Jane Littman, a member of the group, the spelling *Godd/ss* is designed to promote the ineffability of God's name and to distinguish it from masculine or feminine names for God. Different members pronounce it differently

Littman stresses that the Jewish mystics of the medieval town of Tzfat—not Pagans—were the first to cast circles. "They'd dress in white, go to each direction in the city, and call in the sacred spirit of that direction. They would end with the Sabbath Bride in the east."

"Our group is not about the Goddess," Carnay adds. "It's about finding spirituality that resonates in our lives today."

An artist, Carnay created a sculpture in the form of an amulet entitled "Woman at the Wall," a sort of Goddess boldly blended with an allusion to the feminist Jewish group which searches for equal representation during prayers at Jerusalem's Western Wall. Carnay explains: "It's a woman of courage, a metaphor for women who take risks in moving away from traditions to create a sacred space."

Goddess religion has also encouraged Jewish women to investigate their spirituality—and then return to Judaism, Littman suggests. And while Tikva Frymer-Kensky, the rabbinical school professor, doesn't expect Jewish Pagans to come flocking back to Judaism, "There is something emotionally satisfying for Jewish Pagan women in seeing Judaism become more feminist," she says. "When they hear real feminist Jewish services and real feminist Jewish understandings of Bible, formerly-Jewish witches have tears in their eyes."

"The choices open to me 25 years ago were few," Ruth Barrett says. "I took my spirituality and ran. I may go on to become a rabbi—and I'm not saying that to be flippant. Who knows? Life is long."

Rahel Musleah is a journalist in NY who contributes regularly to The New York Times, Publishers Weekly and other publications.

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Feminist Philanthropy

by Susan Weidman Schneider

"Direct service—a hot meal, a night in a homeless shelter—may benefit people one by one, and it may be very satisfying for the giver, but it may not be the best solution for the social need. I believed in 'power to the people' before I ever read Maimonides [whose highest degree of tzedakah was to help a person become self-sufficient]. The world understands direct service, but it's harder for people to understand what grassroots organizing is, and how it works. Slow and often small changes make a difference, and people stop feeling 'I can do nothing', 'I am nothing'," says Judith Herr, an activist philanthropist in Bethesda, Maryland.

This article gives snapshots of the experiences–and ideologies–of women whose philanthropy is largely directed towards Jewish "renewal" organizations, women's issues groups and progressive social causes. While many of the women interviewed for this article also write checks to UJA or to Jewish social-service agencies and federations, their energies are more likely to go to the "alternative" causes they support both emotionally and financially.

Marlene Provizer, Director of the Jewish Fund for Justice, which funds grassroots social change efforts such as training women of different backgrounds to work together as advocates on economic issues affecting women and children, bristles at the use of the term "alternative" to categorize non-UJA-Federation-synagogue philanthropy. "Some of our givers use us as their sole Jewish giving," she points out, "and tikkun olam [repair of the world] may be the only way they express their Jewish identity."

The women involved in what we'll call traditional philanthropies reported [in Part One of this series] that their contributions of money evolved from their volunteer work and was an outgrowth of their other Jewish commitments and interests. In contrast, for several of the women interviewed for this article, social-change oriented Jewish philanthropy, through one or more of the organizations created in the past 15 years, was a first step into other Jewish connections, rather than a culmination of their Jewish involvement. Phyllis Goldman, Director of the New York office of the New Israel Fund, which provides direct giving to projects in Israel as an alternative to or supplement for UJA giving, says, "the NIF is an entry point. For some women this is their Jewish link."

"It's not as if there are two rigidly separate groups," says Provizer. Some women support mainstream organizations while at the same time contributing time, money and leadership to social change organizations." Provizer speaks of these as "crossover givers."

One such crossover giver is Barbara B. Dobkin of New York, who in 1993 gave a one million dollar grant (with her husband Eric) to start Ma'yan, The Jewish Women's Project at the Jewish Community Center on the Upper West Side. Dobkin has also been heavily involved with New York UJA/Federation. "The bottom line for me is simply this: what the money does." Ma'yan creates women's programs—a conference on Jewish women's philanthropy, a feminist seder, outreach to Jewish lesbians and an annual research-based report which quantifying the anecdotal data on the sattus and roles of Jewish women—"the gaps as well as the areas of progress." leadership in the Jewish community. But. she says, "the direct social service work UJA/Federation does is as important as the progressive stuff I fund."

Here's a day in the life of this crossover giver. She turns her Manhattan apartment over to the UJA for a fundraising effort one afternoon, to a female political candidate that evening, hosts Alice Shalvi, founder and chair of the Israel Women's Network, as an overnight guest, and is approached the next morning in her study by an independent feminist filmmaker trying to raise funds to shoot E.M. Broner's novel *A Weave of Women*, by the Women's Legal Defense Fund and by EMILY's List. She's unusual because of the passionate generosity she brings to the causes she supports, and the amount she gives, but the scope of her giving defines a small but growing cadre of savvy women donors who contribute to social-change causes at the same time that they maintain their mainstream Jewish philanthropy. Some stay connected to traditional Jewish organizations, partly because they hope to move traditional Jewish organizations in feminist—or at least egalitarian—directions.

Another crossover giver, Leora Fishman, a Boston physician, says that her tzedakah path started with "alternative" funding and then moved into the mainstream. "Ten years after I first gave to the New Israel Fund I made my first contribution to UJA-Federation. The federations really are the backbone of domestic social welfare programs, and until a better structure evolves I'll continue to support them. But my major interest is in the organizations that support women's issues and social justice."

Herewith, some observations based on dozens of interviews with Jewish women thoughtful about their own philanthropy:

These women are pro-active givers, looking for causes consonant with their own beliefs and their life experiences. Philanthropy is not an isolated part of their lives. The motives behind their highly purposeful charitable giving are the ideologies which drive many other aspects of their lives as well. They want to make systemic change in social institutions which they have examined and found wanting.

Their work lives, or their professional training, often has an effect on what they fund. Leora Fishman says, "I've worked

Part One of LILITH's series on Jewish women's philanthropy [Winter 1992] was an in-depth report on the ways women give money to "mainstream" Jewish institutions—Jewish federations, United Jewish Appeal (UJA), synagogues and such Jewish women's organizations such as Hadassah and B'nai B'rith Women. That article revealed that women give differently than men do (they're less competitive), ask more questions when they write a philanthropic check, do not want to stand out from their peers, feel comfortable in the company of other women and (unlike men) respond to issues and causes rather than to the social status of the person asking for the money.

Women Changing the World with their Dollars

for fourteen years with immigrants from Central America in a Boston clinic; I know through them what conditions are like, so I support various kinds of medical aid in El Salvador

"A family joke is that from the age of six or so I wouldn't ever finish a game of Monopoly. After all the property was bought up, and it was time to start trading, I couldn't play anymore. I wouldn't be a party to someone else's going bankrupt. I was always hyper-vigilant to other people's needs. The whole progressive movement is about fairness and equal opportunity, about not being limited for life by the circumstances into which you were born—sex, race, country

"My first awakenings to injustice in Judaism were through feminist questioning. I was good at reading Torah and never had a chance to use it. This was my eye-opening in how the mainstream Jewish community was not always right; I had a traditional Jewish education as a child, and then I found out that girls couldn't do all that boys could do."

Judith Herr, whose three million dollar family foundation she now helps direct, grew up in a mixed African-American and Jewish neighborhood in the Weequahic section of Newark (immortalized by Philip Roth in *Portnoy's Complaint*). There she witnessed firsthand how her Black friends were harassed by the police, threatened because they were hanging out in public places with their White classmates. Herr now belongs to a synagogue in Washington, DC, Adas Israel, which she describes as a "congregation of plenty" which decided not to move to the suburbs as the Jewish community in Washington shifted northward.

"I've given to a number of local housing organizations—and to projects trying to correct the conditions that cause homelessness. My graduate work was in community organizing; when I support a group I go and talk to them—'How do you involve the people you serve? Beyond recreation programs, how do you do leadership development for youth?'"

Ronna Stamm of Chicago, vice-president of the New Prospect Fund, which addresses "the underlying causes of poverty and racism" and a member of the board the Jewish Fund for Justice, is, like Barbara Dobkin, a former social worker. "Part of me is still the social worker; I want to say when I hear of a needy project, 'I'll come volunteer.' That impulse helps me to be a better grant maker." Stamm, a specialist in funding advocacy projects. Like most women donors, Stamm reports that she asks a lot of questions, and spends a lot of time with its workers to learn how an organization functions. "It took me a long time to see philanthropy as a form of doing my work, which before had always been hands on. Part of me is still the staff person from the '70s."

Women understand how to make systemic change

What makes feminist philanthropy? Don Pearlstein, Director of the Boston office of the New Israel Fund answers: "A feminist orientation says we need system change, not just Bandaids. We need to overcome institutional barriers, not just provide services."

Susan Crown of Chicago, President of the Arie and Ida Crown Memorial and Vice President of Henry Crown and Company, merges direct-service philanthropy with an understanding that fundamental attitudinal change is often the necessary precursor to changing entrenched institutions. She has just been elected president of the Juvenile Protective Association in Chicago, "which takes the worst cases of abuse and neglect in town, focusing on kids under three years of age. We are looking at families at risk for abuse and we look not only at what's done, but at the family's attitude. We believe that every parent wants to be a good parent; we try to tap into that with a great degree of respect." Through the Covenant Foundation, created by the Crown family in 1991, Crown is trying to bring about fundamental shifts in attitudes toward Jewish education to cultivate "excellence, effectiveness and creativity."

Like other adventuresome Jewish women philanthropists, Crown is willing to put her money where her outrage is, to move from dissatisfaction with some social reality to making a positive change in that reality. "There was an entirely self-ish motive in the creation of Covenant—we were all unhappy with the Jewish education we'd had, and we were afraid that our children would be as turned off as we had been. We felt that the state of Jewish education today could be likened to a huge knot, and we decided to start untying the knot at its ends, one by one. We want to build on strengths, rather than standing on the sidelines being critical. The strengths here are people—the teachers, mostly women, who are unrewarded and viewed as nonprofessionals. Our goal is to shine a spotlight on people across the whole spectrum of Jewish education; we hope that one result will be that Jewish education will be taken seriously as a career."

They supply venture capital for ideas

Like investment bankers, Crown and her cohort of progressive women philanthropists are underwriting nonprofit startups. "We provide venture capital for ideas," says Crown.

Marcia Cohn Spiegel of Los Angeles uses similar language when she describes how she used a windfall "to leverage social change." With a one-time-only amount to give away, Spiegel decided, "There was no point in giving the money to the local Jewish federation because, among other things, they'd expect the same size contribution the next year, which was impossible. I had written my master's thesis —'The Wrath of Grapes'—on Jews who were alcoholics, including Jewish women. I decided to multiply the effectiveness of the money I had by underwriting a course to teach rabbis and other educators about substance abuse in the Jewish community. They then ended up starting treatment programs and teaching others. If you don't have tons of money, use it to train professionals who will have power to make change."

New or untested projects don't scare them. Remembering that the Chinese character for risk can be read as Danger or Opportunity, these women are bold.

Susan Crown comments, "Most of the

women I know like to shake things up." Lee Meyerhoff Hendler of Baltimore, for example, has helped to underwrite an experimental education program for girls (based on a Carol Gilligan model) at a private school in Baltimore. She says, "My mother was a tenacious risk-taker who had great ideas and made them happen. She threw her kids into the pool at age two and said, 'Swim out.'" Hendler herself is willing to put her philanthropic dollars behind controversial causes she believes in, but notes that "A problem for many women is that they're afraid to own their interest in a new idea, because if any idea fails, the woman who funded it is associated with the failure. Risk doesn't scare me; I had my mother as a role model."Hendler's citing her mother's innovative philanthropy is paralleled by Susan Crown, who says "Philanthropy was always a project for my parents. Multiple sclerosis was a favorite project of my mom's—a good friend of hers had M.S.—and I remember going around with her to investigate wheelchair accessibility in 1965, when no one else was concerned."

Judith Herr recounts her own influences: "My dad's mother was the one people would come to if they needed a home. And my Dad taught us. The first night of Passover, before we went to my aunt's for Seder, Dad would take us to the Hebrew Sheltering Home to help serve dinner; he did this with all his 45 nieces and nephews. He taught us to appreciate what we have, to look out for other people and be responsible for them, and also to let people learn from their own mistakes, not just doing for them.

"When I was going on civil rights marches in Newark, my mother was frightened. Father said 'It's okay for her to go and march even if the police are beating people. She has got to take chances, take risks, know how the world works.' On one march I saw my father in the background. Mother must have told him to go see what was going on for me."

These women see themselves as instrumental, agents of change not passive executors of others' wishes.

"We have to take control of the money that is already in women's names," asserts Esther Leah Ritz of Milwaukee. Ritz, who has serves on the board of several national and international Jewish organizations, makes generous contributions to Jewish federations, to Jewish causes in the USA and Israel and also to the New Israel Fund, was involved in Jewish-Palestinian dialogue groups years before the current peace efforts. "We know that women control the majority of

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAREN STOLPER

wealth in this country because they inherit it from men. And when we do take control we're likely to spend it differently. I now give far more than my late husband and I would have given jointly—because I am willing to touch the principal. He wouldn't have been.

"I derived a formula. I decided to give X percent of my net worth each year. Invest the rest and you can build it up again. I recognize that I'm an anomaly. I'm unhappy that more women aren't doing this. And men too."

An unsurpassed amount of money is going to pass into women's hands in this generation as husbands die and fathers leave their estates to their children. (*The Chronicle of Philanthropy* estimates that this will be "the largest transfer of wealth in the nation's history") As more women use their risk-taking abilities, the face of philanthropy will change also—with larger sums being made available by women who want to see the good their money can do in their own lifetimes, rather than giving in small ways now and leaving large bequests.

Thoughtful women are willing to confront uneasiness they—or their children—may have around wealth.

"In some progressive circles, you had to park your wealth at the door. You could not be your whole self, a person with money," says Margie Fine, former Director of the North Star Fund in New York City, which distributes money to progressive causes, and a majority of whose funders are Jews. North Star has become "a safe haven for women and men, a community in which they can talk about issues around money."

Lee Meyerhoff Hendler, a third-generation philanthropist, says she has none of the guilt some wealthy women admit to. Hendler says "Having money to give away to make a difference in the world is nothing I feel uncomfortable with. I'm just aware of the awesome and powerful responsibility it carries, because you hold in your hands the ability to make real change."

Yet many of the women who have gathered at annual meetings of the Jewish Funders Network (a loose association of Jewish family foundations and larger, Jewish-oriented foundations such as the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the Revson Foundation) speak about the uncertainty they experience over having substantial sums of inherited money to disburse. "Coming out as a woman of wealth has been much harder for me than coming out as a lesbian," says one woman who requested anonymity. Leora Fishman comments that "Men do a lot less second- and third-guessing than women do—like feeling guilty about giving away inherited wealth. Women have to sort out lots of mixed messages about money."

Funding Jewish and feminist causes is how some women reconcile their allegiances.

"I'm trying to find my way as a white Jewish woman of privilege," offers Aviva Zukerman, 25, of Toronto, a director of the Zukerman Foundation, started by her mother and her late father in 1986. She says that she asks herself, "Where do I fit in with women in poverty? Or with women of color? I'll always be outside that, but I can help facilitate their empowerment." At the moment she is helps staff a social-action nonprofit theater troupe in Toronto, which focuses on women's rights. "Shouldn't I also be working on Jewish stuff?" she asks herself, and answers, "Especially on domestic violence? Especially in Israel?"

Why are so many women drawn to "alternative" charities? And what are the differences women perceive between social-change organizations and traditional Jewish charities? "The reason women respond so strongly to social change philanthropy is because women have a better chance at playing a leader-

ship role," says Marlene Provizer. A quick survey of progressive Jewish organizations reveals that most have made an effort to have women functioning at the highest levels of decision making Fishman, a board member of the Philadelphia-based Shefa Fund, which provides grants to "promote Jewish social responsibility" and serves as the nexus of the Jewish Funders Network and a member of the distribution committee of the Gimprich Foundation, happily reports that "the women on these boards are as verbal, vocal and ideological as the men. Women count equally with men, and have influenced a lot of the giving."

Don Pearlstein claims that "what's missing in federation women's divisions is that there is no feminist culture. The younger or feminist-identified women look for organizations that are starting to model something fresh."

The end result matters to these women much more than the secondary gain they might receive from belonging to an organization.

Many of them are full-time philanthropists, for whom intelligent disbursement of their funds has become their life's work. They give money to create change, to do tikkun olam, and the satisfaction of the work they do sustains their interest and their participation. They don't—for the most part—get their gratification from the meetings or programs held for donors to these causes

Olga Mack, president of the New-York-based Albert A. List Foundation, which gave away approximately $900,000 in 1993, puts it very bluntly, "I don't like going to functions. I'm a hands-on person. I want to give my money to causes like the environment, censorship, women's rights." No group dynamics are necessary to generate the interest of women like Mack. No highly emotional pitch for a charity spurs them to give as much as their own knowledge (often derived from the work they do professionally or from their active volunteerism) of what wrongs need to be righted. "I happen to be a real feminist," she says. "I fund reproductive rights because I think that one of the things that keeps people on the bottom of the economic ladder is having unplanned or unwanted children." And of her own role, she comments, "I don't like going to luncheons. I don't want to spend the money on the clothes or jewelry. I'd rather give it away."

This very frank approach to self-adornment reinforced by Lee Meyerhoff Hendler's comment that she is "angry at women who think nothing about buying a two thousand dollar dress, but who can't give two thousand to their kid's private school. We need to change the value system for women, so that a woman's philanthropy gives her as much status as what's on her back."

Judith Herr puts succinctly describes the differences between socially motivated philanthropy and social-change philanthropy as "the difference between narcissism and altruism in what motivates people to do good."

Are Jewish women philanthropists different?

Nan Fink of San Francisco is a Jew-by-choice and the original publisher of Tikkun magazine, which was bankrolled in its first several years of publication by her philanthropy. She is also a member of a women's group called the Wandering Menstruals, and chairs the board of the Shefa Fund. Fink is in a unique position to note some of the differences between Jewish women philanthropists and their non-Jewish peers.

"For many women, inherited money is contaminated with issues around family relations. But it seems to me that Jewish women don't have as much anxiety or embarrassment about their wealth. Money has always been an enormous issue in my life. When I first gave money away I was always anonymous in my giving because I couldn't tolerate having anyone know that I had money.

"I grew up in a family with old San Francisco money, and a saying in our family was 'Fools' names and fools' faces are always seen in public places.' This meant we had to be under cover; something was very hidden. I was envious of Jewish women raised in families where philanthropy is assumed. When I told my own family about my philanthropy, they just saw me as an incompetent money manager, not as a charitable person. They would have had me hold on tight to the money, preserving the wealth for the family."

"Jewish women who have money are more likely to come from a tradition of responsibility for that money, the sense that something good should be done with it." ⌟

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Palestinian Women

AT THE CROSSROADS OF MIDEAST PEACE

BY AMY AVGAR

When peace broke out last September between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, both sides were unprepared for the dramatic course of events that many had viewed as improbable in this generation. Now, as the political debate moves from the realm of the theoretical to the practical, from the improbable to the possible, Israelis and Palestinians face the difficult task of reconciling national as well as personal dreams and aspirations, fears and apprehensions.

Israel civil-rights activist Leah Shakdiel once described her early encounters with Palestinian women as follows: "I found myself face to face with real, three-dimensional people who had complex identities as women, Palestinians, Moslems, wives, mothers, and who also had national aspirations, like myself. In my family, we were never taught to hate Arabs, but they remained an abstraction and something external to the internal Jewish dramas that were the focal point of my Zionist upbringing. When I see them as real human beings, I must try to reconcile their aspirations and identities with my own."

Revolutionary changes have taken place in the lives of Palestinian women over the last two decades. These changes have dramatically altered female status and gender roles, giving rise to a women's movement and a brand of feminism that is fundamentally different from Western feminism .

For Palestinian women, the struggle for liberation has been inextricably bound to the national struggle for self-determination. The inseparability of women's issues and national concerns, which is so basic for Palestinian activists and problematic for Western feminists, was highlighted, as many will recall, at the 1985 Nairobi Conference of Women, where the United States delegation threatened to walk out in protest against the politicization of the event by the Palestinian delegation. Similar scenes have been repeated often at international women's gatherings.

The equation between nationalism and feminism among Palestinian women is both ideological and pragmatic. On the ideological level, as Knesset Member Naomi Chazan once observed, "If equality is a principle, then it is universal and must be applied to self-determination for all." On the practical side, nationalism has provided a legitimate haven for Palestinian women's activities outside the home. Such activities run counter to the restricted view of female roles that continues to prevail in traditional Arab society. By aligning themselves with the national movement, women have been able to move into the public sphere with relative ease and begin breaking down the barriers that for centuries kept them isolated, dependent and powerless. In a

similar way, the donning of the veil (that might appear to be a reversion to tradition and confinement of women) has become a political symbol of national unity that allows women the freedom to move and mingle in the male world while remaining segregated, thereby preserving the all-important family honor.

Palestinian women have been a significant force behind the Intifada (the popular Arab uprising), and there are some who have played a role in peace-oriented activities as well. But having consciously put national interests before any feminist agenda, the question now is, in light of the dramatic events of the past month: Can the gains of Palestinian women be translated into gender equality, female empowerment and productive social roles once the revolution ends? Or will women finds themselves, as in other revolutionary movements in Algeria, Cuba and China, relegated to traditional and marginal positions in a post-independence society?

Palestinian educator Dr. Mariam Mar'i says, "Our women are conscious of what happened in other movements, and that awareness will help them avoid making the same mistakes." She points to Hanan Ashrawi, a Palestinian negotiator at the formal Israeli-Arab peace talks, as a sign of progress and a role model for women. Others, however, like Professor Alice Shalvi, Chair of the Israel Women's Network, interpret the sea of male faces at the signing ceremony on the White House lawn as a danger sign for Palestinian as well as Jewish women. Rabin's references to "men of peace" in his speech, and the relative absence of prominent female figures among the various working groups established to pave the road for self-government and economic development in the West Bank and Gaza are only a few of the distressing signals. There are also no women on the executive committee of the Palestine National Council (PNC), which, since the 1988 Declaration of Independence, has acted as a Palestinian government in exile. Says Shalvi, "It is men who are shaping policies that will determine the status and condition of women."

THE PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The beginning of the Palestinian Women's Movement is traced by scholars and feminist writers to 1978, when a group of middle-class, university-trained activists established the Women's Work Committee (WWC) in Ramallah. The aim was to create a political organization with a specific women's agenda. Leaders of the WWC began by organizing women within existing and long-standing charitable societies.

One of the first priorities of the group was to address the condition of young female workers, who represented some 95 percent of the work-force in the West Bank garment workshops, the equivalent of the American sweatshop. These women from refugee camps and villages, prevented from working in factories or at other outside jobs by traditional family values or obligations, were exploited as cheap, readily-available labor for the Palestinian subcontractors who operated the workshops for Israeli companies. According to Phillipa Strum, an American civil liberties activist, who in her 1992 book The Women Are Marching documented the Palestinian feminist movement, many would "work for ten to twelve hours a day...so desperately in need and so unaware of their rights, or afraid to assert them, that they frequently [worked] without knowing how much they [would] be paid."

When the WWC attempted to persuade women workers to enroll in trade unions, according to Strum, traditionalism again intervened. Husbands and families objected to women's involvement in gender-integrated groups—even when the men themselves were union members. To circumvent such objections, the WWC leaders set up union centers in their own homes where only women unionists met. Strum estimates that by 1984 some five percent of the over 30,000 female workers had become unionized, compared to about 17 percent of the men.

The next goal of the Committee was to mobilize the masses of women outside the urban areas of the Ramallah-Bethlehem stretch where the majority are educated, upper-middle-class Christians. A leading force in this effort, and the woman most closely associated with the evolution of the Women's Committees, is Zahira Kamal. Like her Israeli-Palestinian counterpart Mariam Mar'i, Kamal is a teacher of education who emerged as the head of the first committee established in Ramallah. Concerned about the overwhelming majority of wealthy women in the older charitable societies, she persuaded the WWC members to go out to the periphery, to the camps and villages, and learn about the problems of the masses.

The type of grassroots activity initiated by Zahira Kamal has been a critical factor in the emergence of both feminist and national consciousness. Rita Giacaman, Professor of Community Health at Birzeit University, which has produced no small number of Palestinian female activists, says that this kind of activity raised the consciousness not only of the villagers but also of "nice middle-class academics like myself." Giacaman says it was through her health-related activity in the refugee camps and rural areas that she came to recognize the significance of gender and other feminist issues. This new awareness on the part of the elite led Kamal and others to begin work on a women's agenda, calling for an improvement in the social and economic status of women as part of the process of liberation from all forms of exploitation.

Most of the work of the committees, however, centered around traditionally female functions provided by women for other women. These included childcare and kindergarten programs, community health projects and clinics, literacy campaigns, food production, embroidery and sewing. According to Birzeit University professor Sumaya Farhat-Naser, "Such activities were socially acceptable; they raised women's consciousness and helped them break the social barriers without provoking men or families." Her colleague, Islah Jad, founder of Women's Institute at Birzeit, agrees: "The committees represented a school for women. Although they never really developed a social platform, it was a means to achieve political mobilization of the masses. Women became politicized, as they gained self-confidence, speaking ability and a feeling of control over their own lives."

While some like Kamal and Giacaman saw dangers inherent in a strategy that sidestepped gender issues, most were satisfied with the enormous cultural gains and freedom that allowed women to organize themselves and engage in activities outside their homes. After all, as Phillipa Strum writes, "These were the daughters and granddaughters of Palestinian women who had left their homes only in the company of female relatives, who were in a different room when men came to the house to talk politics or socialize, whom no one saw any point in educating."

Much like the traditional Israeli women's organizations, which have been formally connected to Israeli political parties (for example, Na'amat, associated with Labor, and Amit, aligned with the National Religious Party) the Women's Work Committees were not immune to the political factionalism. Ultimately, members broke away to establish separate committees aligned with specific parties. The first to do so was a group now referred to as the Union of Palestinian Working Women's

Committees (UPWWC) that has been sympathetic to the Palestinian Communist party. This group was followed by the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC) which aligned itself with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. A third group, the Union of Women's Committees for Social Work (UWCSW), is associated with the PLO.

The original committee, which is now called the Palestine Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC), has adopted the ideology of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. a socialist line compatible with the Committees democratic and grassroots structure. In contrast, the Fatah-aligned UWCSW leans towards capitalism. Although it its the smallest of the committees, it represents the largest and mainstream sector of society because of its ties to the largest political party. The UWCSW has been slow in responding to gender issues, reflecting the lack of response on the part of its political leadership as well.

A small group of intellectuals and professional women [see box], including Rita Giacaman, Islah Jad and Sumaya Farhat-Naser, has remained politically independent but works closely with all of the committees. "Although I consider myself very political," says Farhat-Naser, "I feel a duty to remain independent to maintain the trust of everyone."

THE INTIFADA

The outbreak of the Intifada in December 1987 gave a new impetus to Palestinian women's activities in the West Bank and to the movement begun in 1978. Women gained high visibility as they joined spontaneous demonstrations, followed mass funerals of those killed in the eruption of violence, and threw themselves at IDF soldiers when they tried to make arrests. Many were themselves imprisoned and interrogated. But rather than bringing dishonor on the women's families, activities that would previously have been regarded as shameful were treated as heroic, because they were linked to nationalistic ideals and goals.

The process of politicization and socialization of women, begun by the committees in the late '70's and '80's, no doubt contributed to the extraordinary female power demonstrated during the Intifada. It also provided a basis and model for a new type of popular committee that emerged during the uprising. These committees provided emergency medical treatment, food and other necessities during prolonged and frequent curfews; they formed education committees to replace schools that were closed by Israeli authorities; established agricultural cooperatives managed by women; and served as welfare societies for families whose wage earners were imprisoned, deported or injured. "Women in the Intifada," as Mariam Mar'i observed, "filled the vacuum left by the absence of men, as producers, marketers, managers, and so on."

As the Intifada dragged on, however, with no significant advances toward peace or statehood, the committees appeared to lose momentum and members, while fundamentalism gained ground and families tried to rein in their daughters. Mar'i explains the rise in fundamentalism as a "dramatic answer to a dramatic situation" which she expects is a short-lived response to frustration and despair that will change with new hopes for a solution.

Having developed what many considered a strong social infrastructure, female activists were surprised and disappointed when the bilateral and multilateral peace talks began and it was primarily men who went off to discuss plans and proposals for statehood. Dr. Sumaya Farhat-Naser, as a rare exception, was offered a role in the multilateral talks on environmental issues, but turned down the opportunity in order to stay close to her imprisoned son. "During the Intifada," she says, "Palestinian women like myself worked hard to build peaceful relations with Israeli women through the *Reshet* (or "Net"—short for Israel Women's Peace Net, the Israeli-based organization that has formed a broad coalition with the

FIVE PALESTINIAN WOMEN TO KNOW

ZAHIRA KAMAL

Zahira Kamal was born in Jerusalem where her family has lived since the 12 century. She has a degree in physics and, in addition to founding the largest and oldest Women's Work Committee in Ramallah, has been a supervisor of teachers in training at the UNRWA Women's Training Center in Ramallah. Kamal has been a key figure in the grassroots activities on the West Bank, often traveling by herself to the back streets of refugee camps and villages to listen to rural, poor and illiterate people concerning their immediate needs. Associated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, she is one of few women, along with Hanan Ashrawi, to be occasionally visilble in the public arena.

MARIAM MAR'I

Born in Acre and educated in the Nazareth Convent, Mariam Mar'i was the first Israeli Arab woman to earn a Ph.D. degree (in 1983 from the University of Michigan).

Recognizing the importance of education for advancing the status of Israeli Arabs, Mar'i founded the Pedagogical Center for Early Childhood and Development of the Arab Child, which she has directed since 1984. She also was the founder, in 1975, of the Acre Arab Women's Association.

Mar'i has been a leading force in the women's peace movement, and , in 1988 was a delegate to the New Israel Fund's USA Coast to Coast Tour for "Women and Co-existence."

SUMAYA FARHAT-NASER

Educated in Germany, Farhat-Naser began her feminist activity some twenty years ago, through the Birzeit Charitable Society. When the Society held its first election in 1986, she became Vice President. Today, she is involved in Birzeit University's Community Health Project, administered by women for women in 23 villages.

Farhat-Naser was one of the few women invited to participate in the multilateral peace talks on environmental issues.

RITA GIACAMAN

Educated in the American University in Beirut, Rita Giacaman is an M.D. and Professor of Community Health at Birzeit University. With fifteen years of involvement in the health movement, she has been a leading force in various women's research and training centers, combining grassroots activity with research on issues ranging from contraception to domestic violence. Giacaman, in her 40s, and her husband, a physician who heads the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, recently had their first child.

ISLAH JAD

Educated in Egypt and France, Islah Jad is a lecturer in the Cultural Studies Department at Birzeit University. She was one of the founders of the Women's Affairs and Research Center in Nablus and recently helped establish a Women's Studies Institute at Birzeit University.

Jad is a member of the Technical Committee for Women's Affairs established by the PLO along with other technical committees after the Madrid Peace Talks.

Women's Committees). "Since Madrid, we see men going off in their suits with briefcases to talk peace. Where are we?"

Mariam Mar'i echoed a similar feeling: "When we women talked about peace, we were called dangerous, extremists, crazy and God -knows what. When men begin using the same vocabulary and the same logic about the same issue, it is suddenly legitimate. Usually, women do the work and men get the credit. We need to make sure this doesn't happen in the peace process."

PALESTINIAN WOMEN TURN TO WOMEN'S ISSUES

Soon after Madrid, Palestinian women began actively preparing themselves for leadership and decision-making roles and the building of an infrastructure for Palestinian statehood. While valuable experience was accrued during the Intifada, it was generally recognized that new kinds of skills would be required for the future. "We need to learn about the law and how to change it, about how to get ourselves elected, about economics," says Mar'i. "Nobody will give us our rights on a silver platter. Rights are to be taken, not given."

About a year and half ago, an ad hoc umbrella group of women's committees, charitable societies, and training and research centers was formed. The move was in response to a number of converging factors, not the least of which, according to Rita Giacaman, were despair, growing impoverishment in the West Bank and Gaza, and concern over the encroachment of fundamentalism Many had come to acknowledge what a minority of feminists had realized for some time—that without a clear, agreed upon agenda on women's issues, there could be no real progress towards equal rights and self-determination for women.

The final impetus for explicitly addressing women's issues came last September with the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles. Like their Israeli counterparts, Palestinians reacted with confusion and apprehension as well as hope and anticipation. "What one saw through the media," says Rita Giacaman, "were young people, mostly men, who were either strongly supporting or protesting the events. But there is a silent majority made up of many women who found themselves at a loss. We had become accustomed to making history; now history is being made for us.""

Nonetheless, feminists are clear on one point: the structure of women's activities and their struggle for equality need no longer be dictated by political interests. Now is the time to worry about democratization, about equal access to education,

Ellen Shub

jobs and decent wages, adequate health care and protection from abusive family members. Although Palestinian women appear to agree that the women's agenda must no longer be deferred to national concerns, the problems of reaching a consensus on that agenda, and on a strategy, are overwhelming.

North American feminists will recognize the struggle. Palestinian women are torn over the need to serve middle-class interests as well as those of poor, rural women; over the demands for civil marriage and divorce that would benefit the affluent and educated, versus the imperatives of making birth control available to the uneducated masses; over public power and representation in the political arena, versus private power and freedom of choice in the domestic sphere. Some women place emphasis on economic empowerment as the basis for self-determination; others begin with the division of labor in the home as the means for enabling women to be full participating members of society.

VALUING PALESTINIAN DAUGHTERS

The economic stability and political security that people hope will follow from autonomy on the West Bank is expected by some to bring about an inevitable improvement in both the condition of women and in perceptions of their position in society. To begin with, it is argued, birth rates will decrease as children cease to be seen as either political pawns in the battle for demographic superiority or financial assets required to support the family. With the political pressures removed, birth control can be discussed publicly and family planning addressed as a legitimate health issue. Furthermore, if education is compulsory and equal for girls and boys, and women have access to income-generating jobs, greater value will be assigned to bearing and caring for female children than is now the case. Studies have shown that today mothers breast-feed boys longer than girls; that parents are more likely to take sick boys than girls to the hospital; that malnutrition rates are significantly higher among girls; and, not surprisingly, that infant mortality is also higher for females.

Many Palestinian women activists are not willing to leave matters to an inevitable process. They see male superiority and female inferiority as so deeply entrenched in Arab culture that nothing short of a full-scale battle on several fronts can alter perceptions and overcome centuries of repressive gender roles. Giacaman points out that in many areas Palestinian women are at the very beginning of the consciousness-raising process, when "One doesn't even realize that private problems are in essence public problems." Thus, for example, surveys have shown that Palestinian women tend to regard wife-battering as acceptable and within the normative rights of a husband.

Islah Jad, currently a member of the Technical Committee for Women's Affairs, sees three important fronts for action: First, at the grassroots level, raising female consciousness; second, recruiting cadres of professional women to tackle health, education, family law, and mass media—from a gender perspective; finally, preparing and mobilizing women to assume leadership and decision-making positions at all institutional levels.

LINKING ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN FEMINISTS

In all of these areas, Palestinian women have begun looking toward their Israeli counterparts for guidance and advice as well as for concrete forms of assistance. Leading the way in this area is the *Reshet*, for whom the peace agreement coincides with the inauguration of a no-less-complex joint Palestinian-Israeli venture, the "Link." The newly formed "Link" will be made up of two centers—one in West Jerusalem, the other in East Jerusalem—each with its

continued on page 35

Rachel Bornick in the women's balcony of the largest synagogue in Izmir, Turkey.

Transmitting the Heritage

"Tomando El Dulce" translated literally means "taking the sweet". This custom is practiced just before a wedding, as part of "La Visita" or The Visit, which only the women friends and relatives make to the home of the mother or mother-in-law to be, at their invitation. Either the bride, or one of the mothers, passes a special silver tray with a bowl of candied fruit. The guest takes

"Echar aciete al Cal" or "Mirando el aciete" ("looking into the oil") is a ceremony performed when something good has occurred. The woman of the house goes to the synagogue with a bowl of oil, which has been blessed by the Rabbi. She looks at her reflection in the oil and says a prayer thanking God for her good fortune. She puts three wicks into the oil, lights them and then hangs the bowl as an offering.

Sephardi Women of Turkey: a photo essay by Audrey Daniel

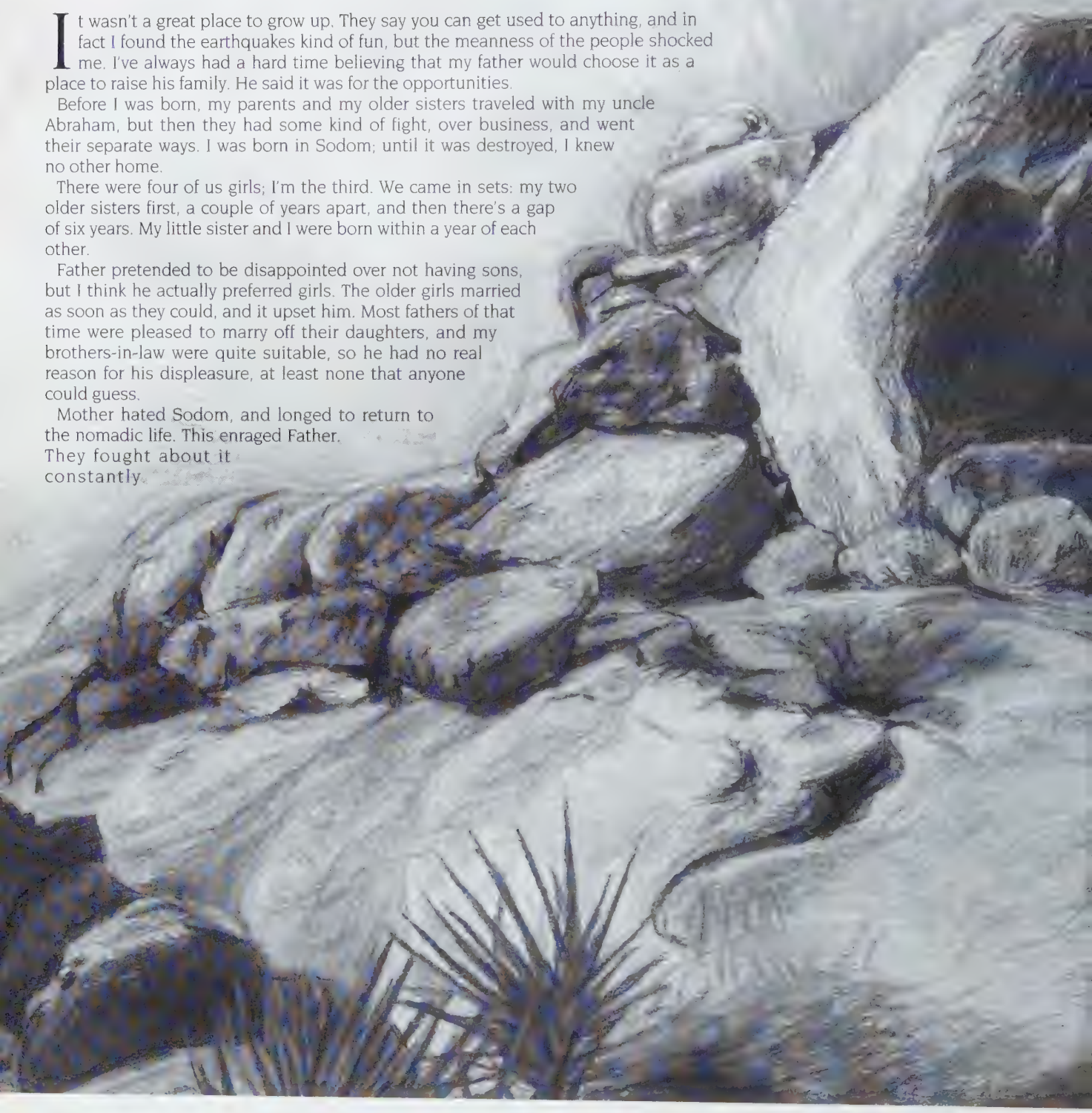
Ten years ago this woman was married in this synagogue in Edirne. More than a century old, it was built by the same architect who designed the great synagogue of Vienna. Now it stands in ruins. There are only five families left in what was, for hundreds of years one of the largest synagogues in Turkey. Due to emigration to Israel, Europe and the US the Jewish community has dwindled

At the [illegible] afternoon cup of Turkish Coffee this woman [illegible] songs from her childhood, and told us a thousand and one stories about the great changes she witnessed in the Jewish community [illegible]

SODO

A BIBLICAL RETE

BY LORI UBI



It wasn't a great place to grow up. They say you can get used to anything, and in fact I found the earthquakes kind of fun, but the meanness of the people shocked me. I've always had a hard time believing that my father would choose it as a place to raise his family. He said it was for the opportunities.

Before I was born, my parents and my older sisters traveled with my uncle Abraham, but then they had some kind of fight, over business, and went their separate ways. I was born in Sodom; until it was destroyed, I knew no other home.

There were four of us girls; I'm the third. We came in sets: my two older sisters first, a couple of years apart, and then there's a gap of six years. My little sister and I were born within a year of each other.

Father pretended to be disappointed over not having sons, but I think he actually preferred girls. The older girls married as soon as they could, and it upset him. Most fathers of that time were pleased to marry off their daughters, and my brothers-in-law were quite suitable, so he had no real reason for his displeasure, at least none that anyone could guess.

Mother hated Sodom, and longed to return to the nomadic life. This enraged Father. They fought about it constantly.

M

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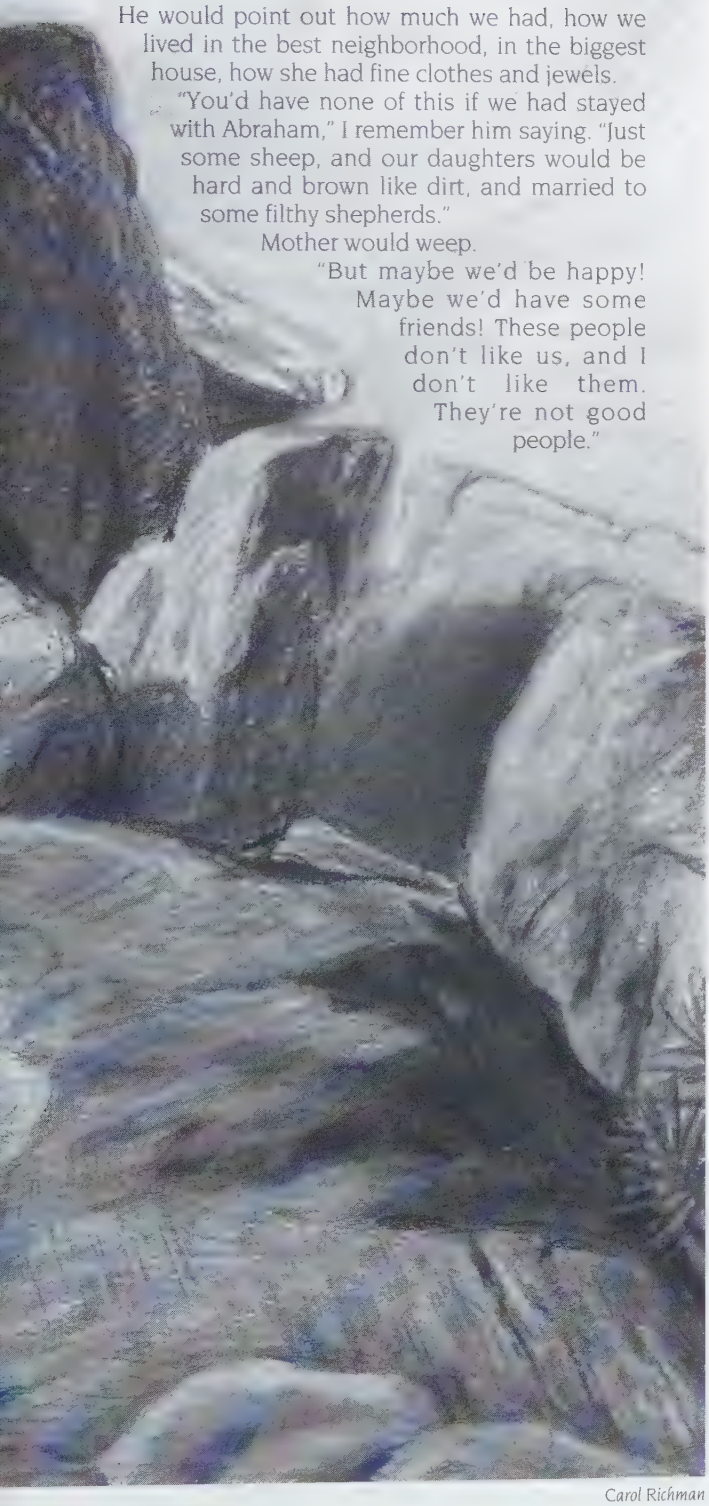

He would point out how much we had, how we lived in the best neighborhood, in the biggest house, how she had fine clothes and jewels.

"You'd have none of this if we had stayed with Abraham," I remember him saying. "Just some sheep, and our daughters would be hard and brown like dirt, and married to some filthy shepherds."

Mother would weep.

"But maybe we'd be happy! Maybe we'd have some friends! These people don't like us, and I don't like them. They're not good people."

Carol Richman

And then Father would order her to be quiet, and tell her she was making a fuss over nothing.

My older sisters agreed with him. They remembered their life before Sodom, and they said it was hard and dreary.

"Never anything to do. No theater, no dressmakers, no fun. Just sheep and more sheep."

So Mother washed her hands of them, and concentrated on us. She constantly told me and my little sister that we were different, better than the Sodomites, and not to have anything to do with them.

Well, we were different, but the things that made us different didn't really please her. For instance, Father is famous, to this day, for his hospitality. Now, in Sodom, it was actually against the law to feed the hungry or house the homeless. Some say that is why it was destroyed, and I agree. The sin of Sodom was greed, and hard-heartedness.

So, in theory, Mother, being a good woman, approved of Father's generosity. In practice, however, it meant more work for her, a lot of work in fact.

He liked to drink with his guests, and stay up all night, listening to their tales. And they'd be hungry, and Mother would sometimes have to serve food and drink right up until the light broke over the mountains.

"Why is it up to us to feed the world?" she'd yell at him the next day. "You can't bring home everyone who passes through here. It's not fair to me, or to your children."

But Father would just go all pious on her, and talk about the ways of the desert, and of uncle Abraham, and she would be quiet, falling into a brooding silence that frightened me.

I don't know how long they would have gone on like that. Maybe forever. But one day, my oldest sister Pilotis broke the law, and it changed everything.

By law, anyone found feeding a beggar could be put to death. If a man starved, the Sodomites reasoned, he must have displeased the gods in some way. To feed him would therefore be tantamount to sacrilege. But our God was not that of the Sodomites. Our parents taught us to share what we had with anyone, especially anyone in need.

So on that particular day, when Pilotis went to the well, and found a man near death from hunger in its shadows, she slipped him a little food from our midday meal. Seen, however, by an informant, Pilotis was tried and sentenced to the usual punishment for charity: they stripped her naked, smeared her body with honey and hung her by her heels in the square until the bees stung her to death.

We heard her screams all day and well into the night. With her dying breath, she begged God to avenge her. Mother wept one final time. I never saw her cry again.

Like I said, that seemed to be the beginning of the end. After Pilotis died, there was an earthquake almost every day. Mother became nervous; she thought it was a sign from God.

"We should leave now, and go back to Abraham," she said to Father. "These people have killed your daughter, what more are you waiting for?"

"I still have business here," was his only reply.

Mother didn't answer him. She just muttered under her breath what sounded like either a prayer or a curse. I never did quite hear.

One night, shortly after that, Father came home with two strangers. I liked them right away. Neither of them smiled. Though not quite thirteen at the time, I'd already learned to be wary of men who smiled too much.

Mother didn't smile, either, but she didn't argue when he said they'd be eating with us and then spending the night. All the fight had gone out of her by then.

She didn't go out of her way to fix anything special.

"We're just having bread," she told them. "You're welcome to some, but it's all we have."

The men said it would be fine, but Father scowled. I hoped they weren't going to fight. But before he could open his mouth to say anything, Mother fled out the door.

"I need salt from the neighbor," she said. Sometime later she returned, and we sat down to eat our meal. We ate in silence. For some reason, I felt a terrible sense of dread, and tried to finish as quickly as I could. I wanted to busy myself with chores, and not have to sit there and witness my parents' bitterness.

But before I could excuse myself, I became aware of a rumbling noise outside the house. At first I thought it was an earthquake, or thunder. But it grew, and soon it was obvious what it was: voices. The voices of the Sodomites, who now surrounded our house, demanding that we hand over our guests.

"Send out the strangers," they cried, "that we may know them."

Mother grew pale and still, while Father's face reddened with anger. I expected to see fright on the faces of our visitors, but they looked sad instead.

Father went to the door.

"I can't send these men out," he shouted. "They are guests under my protection. I have two daughters who are virgins. Take them instead, I beg you."

At this my mother shrieked.

"Silence, woman," growled Father. "I know what I'm doing."

"You have never known what you are doing," she snapped back at him, "and now is no exception. Give up the men, and let your innocent daughters live. Or do you want the deaths of two more on your head?"

He turned, then, and made a move towards her. His arm was raised, and I shuddered. He'd hit her before, and it had been terrible to see.

But this time the blow did not connect. One of the men grabbed his arm.

"Lot," he said, "do not sin on our account. You cannot trade your daughters' lives for ours. God will deal with the mob."

But their voices grew louder outside, and still they demanded the men. The house started shaking as they tried to batter their way in. My younger sister burst into tears, and Mother grew pale. I put my head down on the table, covering my eyes.

Then there came a flash of light so bright I could see it through closed lids. Wailing and screams of terror rose from the crowd. The banging stopped; soon all was silent.

It still seemed unnaturally bright. Cautiously, I opened my eyes. A ribbon of light surrounded our two visitors. It almost appeared to be emanating from their skin! I shuddered.

"Lot," said the one my left, in a low, authoritative voice. "Take your wife and your daughters and son-in-law, and leave Sodom. Tonight."

"There must be no delay," said the other. "This place will be destroyed, and everyone in it will perish."

Father hesitated.

"Do as they say," said Mother. "We must leave here, or we will be killed. God's vengeance is upon the Sodomites." Father opened his mouth to speak, then closed it. He left the house quickly. "He's going to get your sister and brother-in-law," said the man on my right. "But he won't be able to convince them to come." I nodded. Whoever this man was (if he was even a man at all), he seemed to understand my sister very well.

"You better help your mother pack up," he added. "It will be quite late when Lot returns."There really wasn't much to pack. We had prospered in Sodom, but my family was not particularly acquisitive. My mother and little sister trembled as they hastened to throw together our few belongings. I remained steady, hoping that I could calm them as well as myself.

Then we waited for my father to return. Our visitors sung to us, to help us rest. Mother, exhausted, soon fell asleep, but I lay awake. Even though these men seemed kind, I didn't want to go to sleep without my father to protect us.

At dawn, he returned. Alone.

"Your sister and brother-in-law will not listen," he said to me. "In fact," he continued, turning to our guests, "I'm not so sure that I should listen to you. What proof do I have that you are telling me the truth?"

"Up!" said one, in a terrible voice. "Take your wife and your two remaining daughters, lest you be swept away because of the sin of Sodom." His voice rumbled like thunder, waking my mother and sister. Finally, I couldn't help it. I began to cry.

But still my father hesitated.

Then it seemed like a strong wind rushed through our home, and I found that one of the men had grabbed my hand. In his other, he held my mother, and on his shoulders, my sister. My father and our belongings were carried by the other visitor, and, although it seemed we were moving faster than any man or beast I'd ever seen, I was not afraid.

As the very first light appeared over Sodom, we were deposited just outside her gates.

"Now run! Run for your lives!" said our friends. "Don't look behind you, or stop anywhere in the Plain; flee to the hills or be swept away!"

Believe me, I was ready to run, because there already hung over Sodom a black cloud the likes of which I'd never seen.

But my father, shrewd to the end, begged them to spare Zoar, so we would have a town to settle in, and not have to live in a cave in the hills. The men, or the angels, or whatever they were, agreed, and told us to hurry, because they could do nothing until we were gone.

MOTHER WAILED AND TORE AT HER CLOTHES LIKE A MADWOMAN. . . . ALL THAT REMAINED WAS THE SALT OF HER TEARS.

Just as we got to Zoar, there was a terrible shaking of the earth, unlike any I'd ever felt before. It was as if the earth was actually trying to shake Sodom and its inhabitants off itself, and out into the heavens.

Then there was a stench, of sulfur and something else: burning flesh. Remembering the warning of the angels, I didn't look back on Sodom, even though I desperately wanted to see what was happening. My sister buried her face beneath my father's arm. He himself shook; I'd never seen him so palpably frightened.

But my mother! She wailed and tore at her clothes like a madwoman. The tears that had been stopped up since the murder of Pilotis now came in a torrent, as she mourned the deaths of both of her older daughters. Then in her anguish, she looked back at Sodom. She babbled now, saying something about saving my sister. And, as she turned, she froze. The life went out of her body, and then her body itself left this life. All that remained was the salt of her tears.

Zoar was very different from Sodom. It was a small town, peopled by simple folk, industrious and kind. But we only stayed there a few days.

Father, driven mad, it seemed, by grief, reacted to the Zoarites as if they were the Sodomites.

"We must leave this evil place," he said to me, early one morning, "lest God destroy it as He destroyed Sodom."

I pointed out that Zoar was nothing like Sodom, and reminded him of the angel's promise to spare it.

But he wouldn't, or couldn't listen. He said he was afraid the men of Zoar would rape me and my little sister, and spoil everything he had left in his life. His eyes clouded over, and I knew he was thinking of Mother.

IT WAS A VERY LONELY EXISTENCE. SOMETIMES I WISHED, GOD HELP ME, THAT WE'D BEEN DESTROYED ALONG WITH SODOM.

So he took us up into the hills. He'd purchased provisions in Zoar, and we planted as soon as we got up there, but little grew. Father had no energy. He spoke of building a house, but never did. Instead, we lived in a cave that was damp, cold and dark.

Little sister spoke no more. Her grief for Mother was deep, but she seemed to fear making any sound. Perhaps she was afraid of collapse.

We'd bought many kegs of wine in Zoar, and Father started drinking every day. He'd look off into the distance, muttering to himself. I tried to keep our family going: I tended the garden, prepared meals, kept the cave as clean as possible. But Father's moods became more and more erratic, while Sister had no mood at all except somber and still.

It was a very lonely existence. Sometimes I wished, God help me, that we'd been destroyed along with Sodom. There didn't seem to be much reason for us to keep clinging to our lives in this cave.

One night, after Father had been drinking all day, I woke to a rough hand clapped over my mouth and a heavy body on mine. Although it was too dark to see, I knew it was him. It was his smell, and the stale acrid stench of the wine.

"Don't cry out," he whispered. "You'll wake your sister, and there's no one here to help you. Lie still, or I'll have to hurt you."

So I lay still, because he was so much bigger than I was, because I didn't want my sister to wake up and be frightened, and because nothing seemed to matter any more, anyway. My life was cold and bitter and full of pain; a little more pain would hardly be noticeable.

I let him do what he wanted, even though I knew it was wrong. And I wondered why the angels had saved us. It occurred to me that perhaps they were not angels, but demons, and my mother and sisters were better off having perished quickly with the Sodomites.

It went on like that for a long time. He would drink all day; he would rape me at night. Sometimes he threatened, sometimes he wheedled, but he always got his way. After a while, my belly started to swell, and I knew there would be a child. I hoped it would be born dead.

Meanwhile, my sister grew more and more listless. I saw Father watching her, and I tried to hide my condition from him. I didn't think she would survive his attacks.

But eventually, when I was heavy with my baby, he turned his attentions to her. She would lie there, unblinking, unmoving. He didn't even have to threaten her. She was little more than a stone.

I thought things couldn't get any worse, but they did. My sister's belly began to swell, too. I wept, knowing that I soon would have three children to care for, one nominally a woman, but with no understanding of what that meant.

The birthing of Moab was long and difficult. I had no help. My screams went unheard by anyone except Father, who spent my whole labor in a drunken stupor, and Sister, who stared, as usual, at the wall of the cave.

But once he was born, some of the bitterness left me. I took care of him the best that I could, and began hiding rations so that I could eventually leave that place. I was determined to go as soon as my sister gave birth and could travel; I wouldn't leave her behind, mad as she was, for Father was madder still.

When Ben-Ammi was born it was winter. She bore him in silence. As if to make up for it, he cried loudly and often. Father, who had taken little interest in Moab, took some negative notice of little Ben. He began to threaten to kill him if he wasn't quiet. I knew it was time for us to go.

One night, while Father snored drunkenly, I took the two babies and bound them to my back. I woke my sister, and motioned for her to follow me. She just stared.

"We're going to leave this place," I whispered. "We'll take the babies and go far away, and we'll never have to see him again." I took her hand.

"I've hidden some rations in the cave," I continued, as if she was no longer mad and could understand me. "We must go in and gather as much as we can carry for the journey." To my great astonishment, Sister nodded, and slipped silently into the deepest part of the cave. A few minutes later she emerged, with the rations carefully bundled on her back.

I looked at her long and hard. I wanted to say so much, but I knew there was no time for it. Father had begun to mutter curses under his breath. It was usually a sign that he was about to wake up.

As we stole out of our home, Ben began to stir. When we'd gotten no more than a hundred paces, he woke up with a wail. We quickened our pace, knowing that my Father would now be conscious. How long would it take him to figure out what was happening?

Despite the heaviness of the children, I began to run. I let go of Sister's hand, but she managed to keep up with me. Tears ran down my face, and hers too. All through the night we ran and cried, cried and ran.

We reached Zoar at dawn. Out of breath, grimy, with two howling infants, we must have looked madder than we both were. Fortunately, an old woman, living alone on the farthest edge of town, found us and welcomed us into her home.

We stayed with her for many months. I hoped my sister would regain her voice, but she never did. Finally, we took leave of the kind woman who rescued us and moved to a small tent, apart from town but near enough to draw water.

The townspeople never fully welcomed us, and my sister died young, silent, gentle and broken.

As for Father, I don't know if he tried to follow us that night. He never came to Zoar, and after a while I no longer dreamt of him. The father I'd known perished in Sodom; the man in the cave, bedeviled by his own sin, was a stranger to me.

But I often dreamt of the night we ran away and how, as we stumbled through the woods, I heard the voice of my mother guiding us and warning us not to look back.

I am old now, and Ben and Moab are gone, with wives and children. I will die soon, without rancor or regret. I know that I have not sinned against my God, Who commands me to bear witness as the only actual survivor of Sodom.

Lori Ubell lives and writes in San Fransisco

The four books reviewed here do far more to unnerve than to comfort. Each of these books touches on a different aspect of the lives of women in the Middle East, raising challenging questions — not only about Arab/Jewish relations, but about the nature of feminism in a global context and about the biases inherent in our definitions of oppression and agency. All four authors challenge traditional assumptions about Middle Eastern women's lives, and attempt to navigate a course between these assumptions and the truth of these women's experiences. Together, these books constitute a window into a different world, and an opportunity to glimpse something beyond opaque, daguerrotype images of Middle Eastern women.

—Rachel Kadish

"Passover Nuptials and Lettuce"

"Many Jewish urban Libyan families in the last one hundred years did not allow their daughters to step out of the house until they got married. Thus, in Ottoman Tripoli there were no public occasions, save one, in which marriageable youth could see each other, and consequently, the preparations for this event were abundant. ... It was customary in Tripoli that once a year, on the afternoon of the last day of Passover, marriageable Jewish youth could see each other in public. The girls were allowed to expose their faces while they stood at the window, on the balcony, on the roof, or even outside the gate of the house. In order to appear at their best, the girls would put on their prettiest garments and jewelry. Meanwhile, young men walked to and fro in the street to view the girls and throw flowers in front of those they met. If a man found someone to his liking, all the other men and women would throw flowers in front of the couple. Thus, this day was referred to as the Festival of the Roses (*hag ha-shoshanim*). The young man would then communicate his intentions to the parents of the girl by bringing to the parents' house a basket full of lettuce and flowers on the same evening: the acceptance of this present meant the consent of the parents to the marriage proposal. This event was called Lettuce and Flowers (*khass wa-nuwwar*)."

—from *Change within Tradition*, by Rachel Simon.

CHANGE WITHIN TRADITION AMONG JEWISH WOMEN IN LIBYA
by Rachel Simon
University of Washington Press, 1992, $30.00.

Taking an academic approach, Rachel Simon's study of Libya's Jewish population provides a feel for the lives of a markedly different group of Middle Eastern women. Simon's work spans a period from the late 1800's to 1967, when anti-Jewish riots sparked by the Six-Day War led to the emigration of most of Libya's Jews and the effective end to a vibrant tradition of Jewish life in that country. Relying in large part on scholarly sources and demographic data, Simon constructs a portrait of the lives of Jewish women amidst the blend of Jewish, Islamic, Christian, Ottoman, Italian and French influences that formed Libyan Jewish culture. Carefully depicting the sharp contrasts between urban and rural life for Libyan women, Simon shows several of the modern Western images of uneducated and heavily oppressed Libyan women to be unfounded.

Sections on Status, Family Life, Public Life, Educational Opportunities and Work display the range of Libyan Jewish women's experiences; occasional anecdotes on birth or marriage customs reveal much about the texture of everyday life, innovative in some regards, highly traditional in others. "When Libyan Jewish parents did not want to have more daughters," Simon relates, "they used to call their daughter Yizza (meaning 'that's enough'). This practice was common not only during the Ottoman period but also well into the twentieth century. Needless to say, there was no similar custom with regard to boys, whose birth was cherished. Bearing a name that reflected rejection was a constant reminder of women's lower status."

Simon points out the painful collision between the modern (including feminist) beliefs held by Italian-influenced or Francophile Libyan Jews and the betrayals of World War II. Enter Zionism, and the appearance of Palestinian/Jewish soldiers serving in the British occupation of Libya. Simon walks us through the rise of a new kind of modern Zionist ethic among Libyan Jews, bringing with it its own innovations in women's rights; her work concludes, inevitably, with a discussion of these same Libyan Jewish communities in their new Israeli setting.

Rachel Simon's book is a valuable contribution to the growing body of historical material that tells the long-neglected women's side of the story. If Simon's writing is at times dry, it is always informative, and its scholarly texture is occasionally enlivened by anecdote.

WRITING WOMEN'S WORLDS: BEDOUIN STORIES
by Lila Abu-Lughod
University of California Press, 1993, $12.00.

Writing Women's Worlds is an unforgettable experience. The stories of life in an Egyptian Bedouin extended family halfway across the world are as compelling as the confidences of a close friend. What makes this book magical is not only the content, but also the immediacy of the tales. Abu-Lughod, a trained anthropologist, explains her decision to construct this, her second book on the Awlad 'Ali Bedouins, as a collection of almost entirely uninterrupted personal narratives.

Paramount in Abu-Lughod's text is the voice of Migdim, the family's "old mother" (matriarch). She recounts how she helped her married-too-young daughter hide in the goatpen rather than sleep with her new husband. She discusses the relative merits of sons and daughters; and she trades jokes with her women friends about the sexual desires of aged women, seeming to give lie to the Western image of oppressed and repressed Arab women ("Men experience nothing compared to women," one family friend proclaims. "'Do they think giving birth is easy? It is as hard as war."). Migdim's complains that her sons disregard her opinions, and that all major decisions are ultimately made by the men.

Abu-Lughod's work also illuminates the transition of these Bedouin from a nomadic to an agricultural existence. Narratives convey the community's pride in its ability to outwit the Egyptian government's land-claiming policies (in one much-loved family tale, a codicil stating that the Egyptian government cannot nationalize agricultural lands spurs family members to plant an entire orchard in one week, much to the chagrin of Egyptian officials and to the vast delight of the Bedouin). The joy of such maneuvers, however, is tempered by hints at the negative impact of such settlement on the lives of these women; increased contact with neighbors, it seems, has prompted some men to impose tighter behavioral restrictions on the women of their families.

If *Writing Women's Worlds* includes heated discussions among Bedouin women on the tensions between themselves and "town women". Readers learn how the Awlad 'Ali women made red, yellow and white dresses out of World War II parachutes from battles fought over their heads. One section of the book concerns the relations between the three co-wives of Migdim's son Sagr (two of whom are traditional to the degree that they do not pronounce their husband's name aloud, the third of whom does not pray or veil herself and who displays a crudeness

shocking to the other women). This is in contrast to the world of Migdim's granddaughters, whose lives embody the conflicts between traditional Bedouin values, modern education, and the Islamic fundamentalism of schoolmates. These young girls' ditties are quite different from those sung by the older women ("If he doesn't get a television / I swear I won't make up my eyes").

Writing Women's Worlds is as comprehensive as it is personal and can be read piecemeal or from cover to cover for purposes ranging from education to entertainment. It's a moving and luminous portrait of women.

IMAGES OF WOMEN: THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE MIDDLE EAST 1860-1950

by Sarah Graham-Brown
Columbia University Press, 1992, $22.00.

What is your mental picture of the Middle Eastern woman? A mute, veiled figure? A faded harem daguerrotype? It is these images and the realities behind them that Sarah Graham-Brown addresses in her study of the artistic myth-making that has etched certain images of Middle-Eastern women on the Western mind. Beginning with a brief introduction reminding the reader of the subjectivity inherent in any photograph, Graham-Brown launches into a dissection of the traditional photographic images of Middle-Eastern women. The book is a series of essays accompanied by captioned photographs; the captions, in many cases, rival the text in interest.

Jeune mauresque" -Young Moorish Woman. Postcard, Algeria, 19th Century. Graham-Brown writes: "From this 'privileged' position the viewer can see both the frustration of the Algerian man who is excluded by the bars of the harem, and enjoy the sense of being in an excluded space."

Graham-Brown writes: "The photograph has posed these women with elaborate care, down to the positioning of the hands, to create a composition in many ways closer to an imaginative painting than to photographic naturalism in its use of line and perspective. The desert scene is set by the use of a painted backdrop and artificial rocks. Whether or not the women were bedouin. . . is impossible to tell.

What is the connection between Middle Eastern photography and politics? "The invention of photography coincided with a period of European imperialism on a global scale," says Graham-Brown. She goes on to reveal in startling captions the truths behind some of the Western world's most popular photographic images of the Middle East. Turn-of-the-century photographs of "authentic" Middle Eastern women in "traditional" dress turn out to be posed studio shots created for European consumption. The "Egyptian peasant woman" of one photograph may appear in the studio's next project as a member of a Turkish harem, and her "authentic" dress is in fact authentic — the only problem is, it's the authentic dress of a Palestinian villager, not a native of Egypt or Turkey.

This book also provides us with authentic (truly authentic) shots of young Egyptian village women, of an aged Jordanian woman smoking a pipe, of a Lebanese actress, of the leader of the Egyptian Feminist Union.

If Graham-Brown falls short of objectivity at any point, it is in her summary recounting of Palestinian/Israeli history: her one-paragraph account of the events of 1948-9 is misleading at best, and may leave a bad taste in the mouths of some readers.

Along the way, *Images of Women* maps out the beginnings of a truer representation of Middle-Eastern women, using photographs to illuminate changes in dress, lifestyles, and work opportunities. Graham-Brown's approach and her subject may be academic, but her writing is lively, and the question of who controls the images of women is a gripping one. The photographs in this book are not easily forgotten.

PORTRAITS OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

Orayb Aref Najjar
University of Utah Press, 1992, $14.95.

Palestinian women have long been neglected by both media and academia, states Orayb Aref Najjar; it is time that we listened to their stories. In Najjar's *Portraits* many Palestinian women speak in the first person—rich and poor, educated, illiterate, politically active and politically embittered.

"My mother is a Druze from Lebanon, a strong free woman," one woman begins. "When I see a plowed field, I feel secure," she adds. "I would feel lost without it. I see a plowed field and I know what my life is."

"I tried to reassure my father," says another woman, "that the situation was not entirely hopeless, and that one day Arab armies would come to our rescue; and I believed it." Later, she relates, "I felt that the United Nations was turning my people into beggars."

"I cry when I think of my children having a life like mine," says a refugee-camp mother. "I'm not interested in political events in Israel; I don't think they will make any difference to us. Israel is like a snake — it can shed one skin and grow another, but it's still the same snake, and a snake is never your friend."

Portraits of Palestinian Women is a moving and often scathing work. "Although Palestinian women are deeply involved in the nationalist Palestinian struggle... the West knows them only as shadowy veiled figures with no interest in politics," writes Najjar. "But home demolition is politics, and so is refugee status.... in this book women appear as themselves in the hope that they will cease to be invisible."

Beyond relating the painful facts of the current Israeli/Palestinian situation, Najjar's book provides a slant not to be found in the media. *Portraits of Palestinian Women* reveals the secondary impingements of the *intifada* on the personal lives of Palestinian women: "It used to be that some girls postponed marriage by insisting that they needed to finish school first; but some teenagers told me that the long-term closure of the schools by the Israeli military government deprived them of that excuse. Young women of that age cannot keep suitors at bay on their own when they are pressured to marry."

A recent surge towards gender equality

'Members of the Harem of Sultan Abdul Hamid with two Eunuchs Setting off to Exhibit Themselves in Vienna after the Sultan had been Deposed'. Probably Istanbul, 1909. From Images of Women, *Sarah Graham-Brown*

takes a dubious form: "A number of women have had serious fights with their families over the issue of participation," one woman recounts. " I even heard a mother shout at a ten-year-old girl, 'Come in, the army will shoot you!' The girl replied, 'If boys can die, why can't I?' The mother turned to me plaintively and said, 'See how strong-willed she is!'"

Palestinian women's activism is a focal point of Najjar's work, and much attention here is devoted to the progress of Palestinian women's organizations in helping Arab women find employment and work towards literacy. The picture that emerges is one of a world of pain and struggle and renewed determination.

It is a matter of course that the stories told in this book are one-sided. Anti-Israeli sentiments abound, and ambiguous references to "acts of resistance" committed by neighbors or family members are necessarily difficult for Jewish readers

–Rachel Kadish

WOMEN IN SOCIETY: EGYPT
by Angele Botros Samaan
WOMEN IN SOCIETY: ISRAEL
by Beth Uval
Marshall Cavendish, 1993, $22.95.

When I tell people I teach about women in the Middle East, I get a common response: "Oh?" (raised eyebrows), "What women?" Judge Deborah, Queen Zenobia, and Sultana Shajar ad-Durr, for a premodern start. But really, I urge: the study of women is a larger question of how women's and men's roles and relations shaped and were shaped by history. It's as much a study of power that produced knowledge or silence as it is a retrieval of women in familiar events.

So it is with delight that I review these two new, informative, high-school texts, both full of attractive photographs, renderings of ancient art and watercolor sketches, and both with sections on "Milestones" (history), "Women in Society" (education, health, law, politics), "Being Woman" (unique issues of that culture), "Profiles of Women" (biographies), and "A Lifetime" (birth through old age).

Uval portrays Israeli women caught in the cross-fire of rapid development and centuries of custom. There are no "typical" Israeli women because they come from fifty different countries and because eighteen percent are Arab. The author weaves in achievements and struggles of Arabs along side those of Jews, and tackles contradictions born of society harboring legal inequalities and misogynist traditions She celebrates individual Israeli women of unprecedented achievement — scholars, lawmakers, activists, scientists, soldiers, athletes and, of course, prime minister, while exposing often unacknowledged obstacles.

Samaan's work is a welcome blow to blatant stereotypes still acceptable in the U.S. that turn Arabs into monolithic Muslim fanatics and represent all women as tyrannized. The photos alone form an invaluable essay on diversity: women appear in chic or ordinary Western garb and a myriad of new veiling styles; they are farmers, artists, factory workers, journalists, housewives, ambassadors, and, of course, queens. The only woman, covered from head to toe, peering out of a slit for her eyes, is Helana Sidaros in full surgeon's regalia at the operating table.

There are problems with these volumes which do not trivialize their worth. Paradigms of development and nationalism that bring these books into being , circumscribe them, too. The Goddess Isis, for example, is portrayed as "dedicated wife and mother and a pioneering women seeking justice and welfare of her people." This is a twentieth-century interpretation by Egyptian women who fought for equal rights by arguing it would not interfere with wifely devotions, and took pathbreaking steps not on behalf of women, God forbid, but for their nation. It is left to teachers to prod students into contemplating the mind-boggling reality of how different everyday life might look with a female deity at its center

The books afford only veiled glimpses of exuberant heritages where women's military, sexual, and spiritual exploits dazzle the mind. The startling power of ancient Egyptian is "the golden age" but astounding details are omitted: full equality in law, complete freedom of movement, equal pay, all children, houses and property owned by mothers; no illegitimate children; "wife," nebt-per, meaning ruler of the house. The first Jewish matriarch Sarah is absent perhaps because revisionist histories of her as High Priestess to an older, matrifocal religion competing with Abraham's new Yahweh are too radical. (Read Savina Teubal's Sarah the Priestess!)

Modernism relegates "religion" to a separate category even though Egyptian and Israeli culture defy this dichotomy (Read Islamic/erotic stories of Egyptian Alifa Rifaat, Distant View of a Minaret). Uval puts stress upon women becoming rabbis, but minimizes the tensions between secular and religious (and Orthodox and non-Orthodox) groups. In both countries, growing fundamentalism is downplayed, along with the gap between women's rights in public and their restrictions in private due to unchanging, religiously-based personal-status laws.

Nationalism tempers the text: Uval addresses anxieties cause by continual warfare on all women's lives in Israel, but neglects power dynamics between Jews and Arabs that exacerbate Arab women's

grievances. Samaan assumes "during the Israeli occupation...the Sinai women...[endured] great suffering." Yet my experience working with Bedouin women of Sinai was that they critiqued all transient governments, whether Egyptian or Israeli, compared to peoples' permanence rooted in land.

Much "knowledge" of other cultures is garnered unawarely from stereotypes of women. These books do a fine job of making entire cultures more accessible to Western students, while dispelling myths of cloistered Arab women or liberated Israeli ones. Good news: these volumes are part of a larger series by Cavendish on women in Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico, and South Africa. Let's get them into teachers' hands! *–Sheila Katz*

FIRE WITH FIRE: THE NEW FEMALE POWER AND HOW IT WILL CHANGE THE 21ST CENTURY by Naomi Wolf, Random House, 1993, $21.00.

In recent years, feminism became "the F-word" that brought careers to a screeching halt. Women already on the corporate ladder learned, under threat of economic silencing, that "to get along, they had to go along." So they kept silent. In Fire With Fire, Wolf portrays a besieged feminism, eroded by a general backlash against women's gains, as well as three antagonistic Republican administrations. She indicts the media as a feminist-bashing collaborator, by its depiction of the movement as hairy, vicious, saggy-breasted, man-hating lesbians.

Wolf says that the consensus—seeking, "thought-police mentality" of the movement turned off many women who felt trapped between caring about men and identifying with feminism. Despite shared concerns regarding pay, opportunities, and health and child care, the chasm between the mainstream and feminism widened. Until Anita Hill.

"American women's anger had been driven underground...under the weight of the Reagan-Bush years...Anita Hill's testimony ripped open existing chasms, driving the continental plates of gender against one another, freeing locked-up energy and bringing down landslides," causing a "genderquake," according to Wolf. The sight of the white male Congressional panel's incomprehension and disregard of Hill's testimony underscored women's lack of representation. Other in-the-nation's-face struggles followed: the William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson rape trials, the Tailhook scandal and sexual harassment charges against congressional members. "The Anita Hill effect" brought issues center stage as women expressed their fury. And, on afternoon talk shows, family secrets dealing with incest, rape, wife battering and child abuse became non-taboo subjects.

In the aftermath, women elected a pro-choice president, and ran for, and won, unprecedented political offices. Wolf points out that as 51% of the population, women have power, but to harness it, the feminist movement must reach the alienated mainstream. She says it is time for women to claim the politics of the empowered, to move from victim to activist, from asking for what history has denied us, to pursuing what we really desire. The feminist agenda must become relevant to all and rouse the fans of Oprah , andGlamour , not only MS.

Wolf encourages women to use their money to support candidates and issues that matter to them. Even "treacherous ideas can, if permitted, cross-pollinate and breed new fruit." Every woman counts, and therefore, "feminism should mean the freedom to think, not thinking one way."

The core of Wolf's "power feminism," is that "women and their experiences matter as much as men...have the right to determine their lives... and deserve more of whatever they are not getting enough of because they are women: respect, self respect, education, safety, health, representation, money." In essence, power feminism sounds remarkably like human rights.

Wolf adds a lucid and significant voice to the third wave, by not only redefining feminism, but offering a blueprint for its realization. She acknowledges and builds on the foundation laid by pioneers like Simone de Beauvoir and Emma Goldman, as well as second wave activists including Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer and Gloria Steinem.

The 31-year-old writer grew up in a time when the law was on women's side. Perhaps, like the Hebrews born free after the Exodus, it falls on those who have not known slavery "to overcome the dragons of niceness that stand in the way, and evolve a new feminine psychology in which it is appropriate and sexy, not scary and unfeminine, to walk with an open heart, a generous mind, and a big stick called clout."

Wolf asserts that history has provided women with an "open moment;" a time to fight fire with fire. She paraphrases Hillel, in concluding with the words, "If not now, then truly, when?" *–Sara Nuss Galles*

THE SATURDAY MORNING MURDER by Batya Gur, HarperCollins,'92, $8.00

The Saturday Morning Murder, a whodunit, translated from Hebrew, takes place at the fictitious, highly reputable institute of Psychoanalysis in Jerusalem. (Batya Gur, a best-selling mystery writer, herself is married to an Israeli-trained psychoanalyst, and is intimately aquainted with such institutes.) A young doctor, opening up the facility in preparation for a professional conference, finds the presenter (his own analyst) dead in her chair. The analyst was brilliant, beautiful and single. Did she, as the senior analyst, know too much? Suspicion immediately revolves around members of the Institute (all of whom know too much), and the inspector himself becomes besotted by the assumed "royal magic" of psychoanalysis.

A book that playfully and critically uses both the authentic tools of psychoanalysis as well as its emperor-has-no-clothes contradictions, it is also a quintessentially Israeli read, conveying the complexities inherent in Israelis' cultural assumptions regarding what is public and what is private. The concreteness of the inspector is a pleasant foil to the mysteriousness of his suspects, and, in the end, Gur entertains us with a wonderful grasp of the complementarity of the world of feeling and that of action. *–Yudit Jung*

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DIFFERENT VOICES: WOMEN AND THE HOLOCAUST
by Carol Rittner and John K. Roth
Paragon House. 1993,$26.95

This book answers the question, "Where were the women?" This anthology draws attention to the specific, powerful experiences of women during the Holocaust.

One subject covered in the special, often unrecognized, role women played in resisting the Nazi brutality. Extraordinary women are highlighted: Gisi Fleischmann, who helped run an underground railroad to get Jews out of Poland, until she was interned and gassed at Auschwitz; Warsaw Ghetto uprising leaders Zivia Lubetkin and Vladka Meed; Bialystok resistance fighter Haika Grossman; Vilna partisan organizer Rozka Korszak-Marle; Franceska Mann, who was murdered after she shot SS men in an Auschwitz-Birkenau crematorium; Mala Zimetbaum, who was the first woman to escape from Auschwitz (she was caught near the Slovakian border, returned to camp and sentenced to be hanged, but she defiantly committed suicide); and, finally, Ninta Teitelboim, known as "Little Wanda with the braids", who was a self-appointed executioner of Gestapo officers.

An obvious difference in the sufferings of men and women related to the women's reproductive systems. Pregnancy was punishable by death at Aushwitz, and a woman could prolong her life only if her child was aborted or killed at birth. A poignant essay by Dr. Gisella Perl, an obstetrician-gynecologist and a Hungarian Jew, recounts how she performed clandestine abortions and deliveries under the most primitive conditions. Dr. Perl, who died in Israel in 1985, originally wrote her memoir in 1948, entitled I was a Doctor in Auschwitz.

After she learned that pregnant women were treated especially cruelly and then routinely gassed, Dr. Perl spread the word from block to block that no one was ever again to admit pregnancy. She began performing abortions in the middle of the night, in the latrine, on the floor, without any water, using only her bare hands. When she delivered living babies, she killed them "I loved those newborn babies not as a doctor but as a mother and it was again and again my own child whom I killed to save the life of a woman," she wrote

Sometimes the women were more successful at resistance than men, because the macho Nazis did not expect such behavior from "mere" women. Thus a group of women working in an Auschwitz factory stole gunpowder from the Nazis. Through an elaborate system of female couriers, this powder finally arrived in the hands of the male Sonderkommando, and was used to sabotage Crematorium IV in Auschwitz-Birkenau on October 7, 1944. Four of these young resistance workers, Alla Gaertner, Roza Robota, Regina Saperstein, and Estusia Wajcblum, were caught and hanged by the Nazis on January 6, 1945. Wajcblum's sister, Anna Heilman, and Rose Meth did not get caught. Their oral histories recounted in Different Voices, tell the story of women's resistance at Auschwitz

An essay by Sybil Milton, resident historian at the United States Holocaust Memorial Council in Washington, D.C., discusses the little-known concentration camps for women. She writes that "the study of women and the Holocaust has barely begun, and the complexities and contours of the subject. . . will keep historians and other analysts occupied for many years." By compiling twentysix women's voices of experience, interpretation, and reflection, Rittner and Roth have made an important contribution

–Rochelle G. Saidel

- Yudit Jung is a psychoanalyst living in New York
- Rachel Kadish is a writer living in New York
- Shelia Katz just completed a doctorate at Harvard with a dissertation on Women and Gender in Jewish and Palestinian nation-alisms and seeks creative, meaningful, lucrative work
- Sara Nuss-Galles is a writer living in Madison, NJ
- Rochelle G. Saidel has a Ph.D. in political science from The Graduate Center of City University of New York and her academic work focuses on memorialization of the Holocaust

A Searching Evocation of the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST PROJECT
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with Photography by
DONALD WOODMAN

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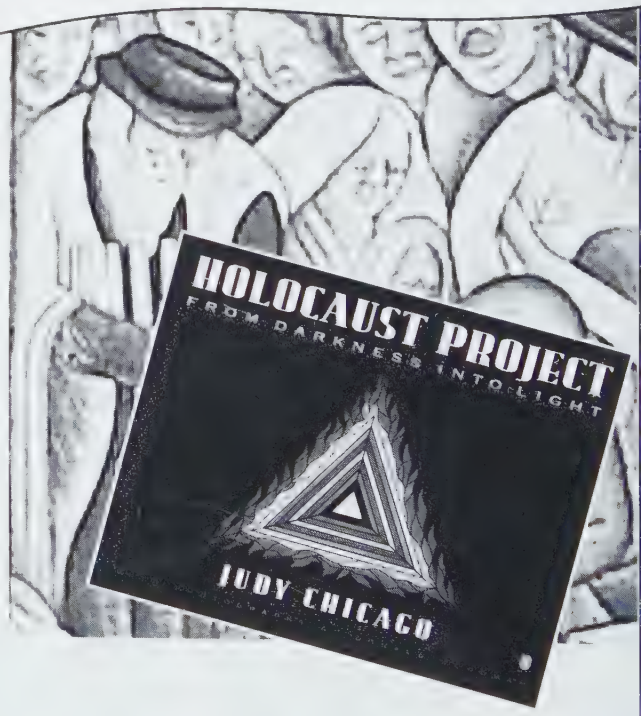

The *Holocaust Project* exhibition is now traveling to museums across the country

READ IT. IT'S A PENGUIN.

EXCERPTS...

NATURE'S GENITALS

What was that seductive fruit that liberated Eve and her geeky boyfriend from that cloying summer camp, Eden? David Rosenberg, in The Lost Book of Paradise *(Hyperion, $22.95, 1993), a post-modern pseudepigraphic literary rewrite of Genesis 2 and 3, comes to his own conclusion while intoxicated by a poet's residency at Fairchlid Tropical Garden in Miami:*

During the time I lived in Fairchild Tropical Garden—the only spot on earth that rivals for me the feel of biblical Eden—two huge rare palms, male and female, were pointed out to me, specimens that botanists have long thought to be the models of the edenic trees of knowledge and life.

A species of Borassus, this couple's fruits bear a remarkable resemblance to human genitals, male and female. Further, the giant fruit has the taste and texture of prime meat, which prefigures the human palate.

In the same manner, an acquaintance with large tropical leaves, some the size of dresses, rights the misconception of the little fig leaves worn by Adam and Eve, as represented in Western art.

—*Susan Schnur*

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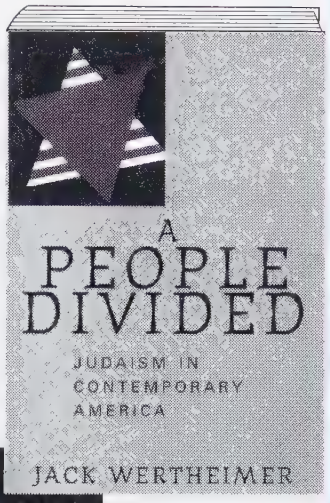

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THE ART OF THE OBVIOUS--TREATING ANOREXIA

Bruno Bettleheim's last book, The Art of the Obvious: Developing Insight for Psychotherapy and Everyday Life, *((Alfred Knopf, New York 1993, $23.00), written together with and completed by his colleague Alvin Rosenfeld, reconstructs a training seminar they led for psychotherapists, and distills some hard-earned therapeutic wisdom*

"You ought to prepare for a new patient the way you prepare for an honored guest in your home. You may feel anxious because you want to receive them as graciously as possible, but you don't know anything about what foods they like or whether they will have eaten or not. You decide to prepare foods they might like. Because you don't want them to feel uncomfortable about your preparations or obliged to eat just to please you. you leave the prepared food in the refrigerator

"When the guests arrive, since you have readied yourself as well as you can, you can focus on them. If they protest that they are not hungry, you will do your best to interpret their words. Do they mean what they say, or are they trying to be polite, to adapt themselves to what they believe to be your comfort? You have no vested interest in either eventuality, so only goodwill motivates you. You still may make mistakes. But your readiness frees you to be alert to please, thus creating an atmosphere in which this potential friendship between you has the best chance of getting off to a good start."

"One teenage girl came to us emaciated. All the food her parents had tried to make her eat was unacceptable for reasons she had not shared. The staff assigned to her sat with her for an entire night and day, trying to make her as comfortable as they could, without any effort to press food or drink on her. After she became convinced that we would not force her to eat or drink—and as a consequence of the positive relationship we had tried to establish with her—she finally let it slip that she just might try to eat a rare brand of canned tuna imported from Norway. We did not ask how much it cost or insist on knowing why she could not accept a substitute. She was a starving girl, and we were delighted that there was some food we could get for her.

"For weeks she ate only this expensive tuna. She began to gain weight and to build up her strength because she ate both the fish and the oil in which it came. Only months later, when we had more fully won her confidence, did she share the secret of why she could eat that particular tuna: It came from Norway, a peaceful country that, in her opinion, had never participated in an imperialistic ventures and had not exploited any people of the third world. Because she considered her wealthy parents' politics exploitative of developing countries, the food they offered her was unacceptable, and since she feared others were in cahoots with her parents, she would not tell anyone else why she refused food.

"After she shared her reason, we easily found food imported from either the third world or the very few other nations she considered "good" countries. That made it simple to enlarge her diet. Eventually, the lengths to which we went to cater to her idiosyncratic food choices impressed her, but it took about a year of this food and repeated tests of our intentions before she ate an unrestricted diet. Even then, for a year or two we continued to supplement her diet with food from "good" countries to show her that we respected her ideals and had not just been humoring her.

"Now, in these early months and years, we never tried to interpret her concern for the weak of the third world as perhaps also reflecting her feelings about how her powerful parents had treated her as a weak child. Had we interpreted this meaningful displacement early on, she might had considered us intrusive and condescending, when in fact the staff really had great respect for her idealism."

—*Naomi Danis*

Kol Ishah

continued from page 7

Two Plays by Jewish Women

"The Survivor," a play by Susan Nanus, had its first life ten years ago as a Broadway production focusing on the life of a young man who managed to survive the Holocaust. Rewritten by Nanus, and directed by her sister Sasha Nanus, the play now tells the story, very movingly, of a group of teenagers in the Warsaw Ghetto, including girls and young women, who fight to resist the Nazis. The play is now playing off-Broadway, to audiences of adults and Jewish schoolchildren, and is available for booking in other locations after its New York run.
For information contact: Richard Kornberg
1350 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 2703
New York City, NY 10019 (212) 582-9456

Cast of *The Survivor* photo by Mickey Pantano

Here, in outline, is the story of "Naomi," a remarkable one-woman play from Israel. Naomi is a young Bedouin woman who is forced to marry a complete stranger. He rapes her on their wedding night, and three days later her mother and sister hold her down while she undergoes *Tohar el Banat*, in which her clitoris is removed using a razor blade. She escapes the family tent and eventually becomes a student at a modern Israeli university where she realizes that she is trapped between two worlds.

After seven years of research among the Negev Bedouin, Israeli social worker, Ruby Porat-Shuval, wrote this play, winner of the 1992 Acre Theater-Festival. It has been performed over 300 times in Israel and the author/actress is now available for bookings of "Naomi," in English, for the U.S. and Canadian audiences in 1994. The audience sits on pillows and is served traditional coffee and pita in Naomi's tent while she tells her tale.

The play is powerful on many levels, for it is not only the shocking reality of one Bedouin women's life, it is a metaphor for the oppression all women endure. Along with the gruesome pain, Porat-Shuval is also able to celebrate the humor and joy of one women's life. Despite the cultural gap between the Israeli actress and her creation, she explains,. "If I peel back all the layers, she is me." For more information:
Renee Schreiber–Assistant to the Consul for Cultural Affairs
Consulate General of Israel
800 Second Avenue
NYC, NY 10017

—Robin Beth Schaer

JEWISH BOYS LESS SEXIST THAN THEIR NON-JEWISH PEERS?

A NEW STUDY OFFERS HOPE.

This year a group of over 700 girls and 750 boys in grades one thru six at five different private schools in Southern Florida, including one Jewish day school, were asked if they would like to see a girl become president. The majority of the girls, including the Jewish girls, responded with a resounding "yes." But for over 750 boys the responses to these questions and a group of other questions were not nearly as positive. In fact 40% of all boys said "no" they would not like to see a girl grow up and be president and over one third said they did not think it would ever happen

Interestingly, more girls (40%) than boys (37%) said that they would like to be President. When asked if only boys were smart enough to become president, 7% of the girls and 41% of the boys answered yes. We found that 45% of the boys and 43% of the girls were told by others that only boys can become president of the United States. It is clear that boys and girls react very differently to this conditioning. 96% of the girls say "yes" they would like to see a girl as president and 93% believe that someday it will happen. But the boys clearly disagreed with the girls, 40% of the boys responded that they would not like to see a girl become president and 34% said they didn't think it would happen

When the responses from students attending the Jewish day school were separated from those attending the four other private schools, we could see that the Jewish girls and boys have more positive attitudes about having a woman as President

Only 3% of the Jewish boys agreed with the 41% of boys in the larger group who thought only boys are smart enough to become President. And only 3% of the Jewish boys, compared to 45% of all boys, had been told that only boys can become president. Happily, 82% of the Jewish boys said they would like to see a girl grow up and be president, compared to the 60% of the boys in the larger group. Eighty-one percent of Jewish boys and 66% of all boys believed that a girl will be President.

A slide show, "How I Grew Up Feeling I Could be President of the United States" helps boost girls' confidence in themselves,and help boys overcome their prejudices. The 41 artist-illustrated slides depict a unisex child who grows up believing that he or she can become President of the United States. For example, one slide shows the child asking Mom, "Can only boys be President?" She answers, "Girls can also be President." On the next slide, the child asks Dad, "Can girls be President?" He answers, "Of course girls and boys can both be President."

On another slide, the child asks teacher, "Is a girl smart enough to become President?" The teachers respond, "Of course." On the following slide, the child goes onto say, "My teachers told me girls have been elected president or prime minister of England, Israel, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, Nicaragua and Canada." When the child says, "It would be great if we could add our country's name to that list" the child's statement is reinforced on the next slide. "My teachers told me I was right," says the child.

Schools alone cannot change children's attitudes, of course. One teacher reported that one of the girls in her classroom had gone home after the slide show and told her father she would like to be President; her father responded, "No way." The teacher said, "I hope she doesn't listen to him." Many teachers have expressed the need for parents to become aware of their own negative attitudes and to learn how those attitudes can crush a girl's hope that someday she can be President of ther United States.

continued from page 21

own staff and board. According to *Reshet* Coordinator, Renee-Anne Gutter, the enters will operate both separately and ogether, with joint activities coordinated by a committee of five Israeli and five Palestinian women, among them Zahira Kamal and Sumaya Farhat-Naser.

The *Reshet* (which will continue to operate as the political force behind the Link) has begun organizing a series of eadership seminars on topics identified by Palestinian women as high priorities, ncluding political and election strategies. Meanwhile there have been meetngs among women from Israeli kibbutzm and the Gaza Strip, and visits of the Reshet to Jericho and to Gaza.

Other Israeli women's organizations, whose activities among Arab women were formerly restricted to within the so-called green line, have begun developing new strategies in keeping with the new political reality. Na'amat has held a series of consultations with representatives from the UPWWC and other groups. According to Nelly Karkaby, an Israeli Arab from the Galilee who has served as head of the organization's Arab Women's Department for many years, "There has been an expressed interest on the part of women from the West Bank and Gaza in learning from our experience in Israeli Arab villages. They want to know about building women's organizations in general, about fundraising and about developing political leadership.

At its October meeting, the board of the Israel Women's Network (IWN), chaired by Alice Shalvi, pledged to place joint activities with and for Palestinian women on upcoming agendas. Among the recommendations was the mobilization of Israeli Arab women who have participated in IWN's political leadership course, as a potential bridge with women from the West Bank and Gaza.

In addition to political campaigning and strategies for getting women elected to governing bodies, the new Palestinian agenda items includes religious and personal status laws; legislation to protect the rights of women and guarantee equal access to opportunities; educational curricula sensitive to gender issues; health care and family planning services that give women control over their bodies and respect their rights to reproductive freedom and choice.

Israeli women continue to be engaged in uphill battles over many of these same issues; they, too, belong to a traditional, and in many respects, Middle Eastern society with a strict dichotomy of gender roles that has effectively blocked their equal participation in public life. Thus, Israeli women are likely to be willing partners in the exchange of ideas. They stand to learn from the experience of Palestinians who succeeded in mobilizing poor and rural women through grassroots activities, empowering them rather than making them the objects of middle-class programs.

Experience shows that conflict resolution is best achieved through the search for solutions to common problems. Women have shared not only the effects of the prolonged conflict on their families and communities, but the experience of subordination and discrimination as well. As such, they may identify more easily than men with the oppression of others, moving beyond a passive acceptance of existing arrangements toward a vision of a new social order.

Finally, women, who remain the primary caretakers, socializers, and educators of the next generation, have a critical role to play in banishing fear, mistrust, and hatred. According to Mariam Mar'i, who was the first Israeli-Palestinian woman to earn a doctoral degree, "Education and reeducation are areas where we as women can make a unique contribution to the peace process. Rather than belittling our traditional functions, we must instill them with greater empowerment and legitimacy."

Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether women will play a role in peacemaking or be pushed aside by the men who faced each other on the battlefield. And perhaps no less significant than the question of women's contribution to peace is how peace will benefit women. Will it be linked to social justice, equal status and an end to discrimination as universal principles? Or, will feminism and the rights of women remain as secondary and marginal to peace as they have been to war?

Dr. Amy Avgar is a sociologist and free-lance writer. She lives in Jerusalem with her husband and three children, the oldest of whom, a son, is currently serving with the Israel Defense Forces.

POSTSCRIPT

On October 21-24, 1993 the Association for Women in Development held a forum in Washington, DC, entitled "Joining Forces to Further Shared Visions." The conference was attended by over 1,200 women from around the world who shared experiences and strategies to advance and improve their women's status. The author of this article and Professor Alice Shalvi of the Israel Women's Network, led a workshop on "Leadership Training as a Strategy for Social Change."

In contrast to similar gatherings of women from Third World countries, Palestinian and other women from neighboring Arab countries seemed to be magnetically drawn to our session and to the lunch that was organized by region (at which we proudly displayed a sign delegating our table as a Middle East meeting ground.). The kits that we had prepared for the workshop, bearing the logo of the Network, were quickly swept up; and women came primarily to listen rather than argue.

The discussion was not devoid of tension. One Palestinian woman, now living in the USA, told of her family's wanderings as refugees since 1948. Without missing a beat, Shalvi recalled her own family's trail form Russia to Germany, to England and finally, Israel. To this, the young woman replied, "We are not responsible for the plight of your family; but you are the cause of our uprooting."

What distinguished this exchange from others, however, was the ability to move from past injustices to future possibilities; from talk of victimization to potential cooperation. The discussion ended with women excitedly exchanging calling cards, reflecting mutual hope that we might meet again in our home countries.

PRAIRIE WOMEN ADVENTURES AND RETREAT

Discover the serenity of the Flint Hills prairie and experience the day-to-day challenges of being a ranch hand on this all-women cattle ranch. Or, if you prefer, simply relax, read that book everyone's been recommending, sip coffee on the deck and then slip into the hot tub. It's your get-away--enjoy it!

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Tsena Rena

Go and See

The title of the Yiddish- language womens' Bible with the portion of the week and folk tales.Tsena Rena enabled women to educate themselves about the most basic resources–the Bible.

"I am your witness" campaign raises relief funds to educate the public about atrocites in former Yugoslavia, supporting grass-roots women's groups there to create their own communities for healing, and providing psychological and medical aid for women and children. The campaign is sponsored by Powerful Choices, a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization founded and directed by Judith Roth, a daughter of Holocaust survivors. Contributors of $20 or more will receive a T-shirt, (indicate L or XL size) designed by artist Sarah Teofanov. *Powerful Choices. Box 30918, Seattle WA 98103 (206) 782-5662..*

An AIDS Memorial Forest, near Beersheva, Israel gives you the opportunity to plant a tree in memory of a friend or loved one. *Jewish National Fund (800) 542—TREE.*

A Tzedakah Pocket, you can hang on the wall (to collect your coins and bills for charity) and take along to distribute your tzedaka when you go out, is a version of an art piece commissioned by Yeshiva University. From the artist for $36.00 plus $3.00 shipping (CA add $2.79 sales tax). *Laurie Gross, 4598 Camino Molinero, Santa Barbara, CA 93110 (805) 683-4561.*

Women's Philanthropy, a quarterly newsletter on women's giving, features women philanthropists who have made a difference in their communities and lists programs, conferences, workshops across the USA. Supporters of the National Network on Women as Philanthropists who contribute $40 or more—and these include philanthropists, volunteer fundraisers and development officers—receive four issues. Andrea Kaminiski, *NNWP, 1300 LInden Dr., Madison, WI 53706-1575 (608) 262-1962.*

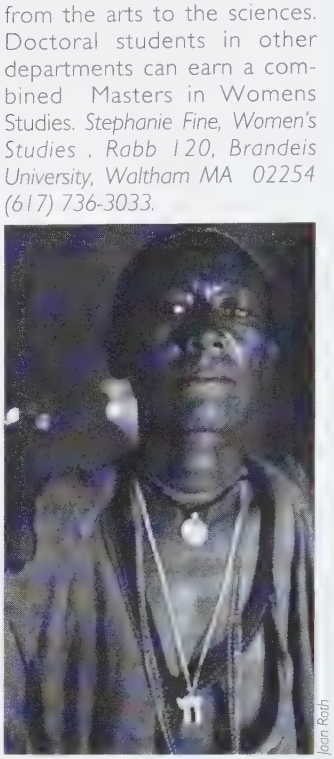
The Association of Hebrew Free Loan Societies seeks to establish new free loan societies in cities and towns where none exist, and will provide kits to assist with fund raising, structure, loan procedures. All loans are free of interest or any other charges and may be used for college tuitions, housing, starting a business or professional practice, general aid or emergency assistance. AHFLS, *205 East 42nd St., New York, NY 1001 (212) 687-0188.*

Seymour Wyet

These women, who just laughed when we asked them for their names, process as many as150 loans a day.

A Yiddish Women Writers Study Group meets for afternoon intensive worshops every few months, alternating between New York and Boston. New members are invited to join the group of mostly current or former graduate students with a feminist, academic-but-not-stuffy approach, who teach each other about subjects they have researched. *Judith Sanders, (617)492-1126.*

An Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Women's Studies (the first in the country), offered at Brandeis University, is taught by female faculty members from across the academic spectrum from the arts to the sciences. Doctoral students in other departments can earn a combined Masters in Womens Studies. *Stephanie Fine, Women's Studies , Rabb 120, Brandeis University, Waltham MA 02254 (617) 736-3033.*



Joan Roth

"Beads from an Ethiopian Necklace" is a slide show/performance piece by social worker Penina Adelman based on her work with Ethiopian Jewish women in Israel. She also offers workshops which can accompany the presentation. Adelman co-authored with Kessaye Tevjieh "Out of Africa" (LILITH Spring 93). *Penina Adelman, 243 Upland Rd., Newtonville, MA 02160 (617) 965-8309.*

What do female rabbis say about sexual discrimination and harassment? Results of a survey conducted by Jennifer R. Cowan of the Commission for Women's Equality of the American Jewish Congress are available from *AJC , 14 East 84th Street, New York, NY 10028, (212)360-1560.*

The Gilda Radner Familial Ovarian Cancer Registry answers questions with written material on the disease. Women with ovarian cancer in their families are urged to become part of the registry. They will be interviewed, asked to fill out written questionnaires and will receive a newsletter. Call the registry at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, NY at *(800) OVARIAN or (800)682-7426, weekdays from 9 AM to 4:30 PM Eastern time.*

Cooking up America: Jewish Women's Experiences, an exhibit by the Jewish Historical Society of the Upper Midwest, will focus on women of Minnesota and Dakotas in the work-force, religion, organizations, and the home. If you have objects or memorabilia to contribute, contact *Linda Schloff, JHSUM at Hamline University, 1536 Hewitt Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104 (612)641-2407.*

Jewish progressives, send your bio. The national office of the New Jewish Agenda, the American Jewish progressive organization, is disbanding, following the recent signing of the Israel-PLO accords. (Local chapters may continue to be active.) The national steering committee invites all former NJA members to contribute biographical information to a national directory of Jewish progressives and receive a copy at a nominal charge. *Warner Bloomberg (408)287-2037.*

Daughters of the Sisterhood: An Anthology of Writings by Young Feminists and Womanists, needs analyses, articles, poetry, documents of actions, photos and other non-fiction writing, addressing priority issues for women age 30 and under. Send author's bio, phone, address, typed double-spaced manuscript by December 31 to *Rebecca Kaplan , P.O .Box 441460, West Somerville, MA 02144 (617)776-7163.*

Women and Recovery: surviving, thriving & reclaiming your body mind & spirit, a quarterly magazine seeks manuscripts (essays, exposes, humor, inspirational, self help, reviews, opinions, personal experiences, photos, cartoons, poems) related to women's confronting challenges such as heart disease, cancer, bipolar disease, lupus, prescription drug abuse, alcoholism, spinal cord injury, eating disorders, rape, incest and chronic fatigue syndrome. Query by mail with pubished clips. Sample copy $5; subscriptions $24 for 4 issues. *Need to Know Press, P.O. Box 161775, Cupertino, CA 95016.*

Mevakshei Derech, probably the grandmother of all egalitarian synagogues in Jerusalem, this officially rabbi-less shul (with many non-Orthodox rabbis, educators and academics among its members) has volunteer congregants give a *dvar Torah* (discussion of the weekly Torah portion) and then field questions from their challenging intellectual peers. This synagogue is independent, and not affiliated with any movement; it offers programs in Russian for recent immigrants. *Shderot Shai Agnon 22, San Simon, office (02) 792501, or Ruth Rigbi, co-chair, at home 523036.*

Kehilat Kol Haneshama, a Reform synagogue, draws several hundred people on a summer *kabbalat shabbat* (Friday night) service to a huge cavernous interior whose unfinished state and sonorous accoustics enhance a sense of spirituality and pioneering communality. Outreach to the community includes the partipation of residents of Magen, a home for mentally disabled adults in the neighborhood at shabbat morning services. Egalitarian gender sensitive prayers are led by Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman. *Rechov Harekevet 57, Baka, phone (02) 724878.*

Yedidyah: an Orthodox shul founded thirteen years ago with the idea that every possible custom (rather than *halacha* or law) should be amended to enhance the religious participation of women. The sexes sit separately here; however women can deliver the *dvar Torah* to everyone, and the Torah is brought around the women's section just as among the men before and after the reading of it. When a man is called to the Torah his mother's as well as father's name is recited. Women have their own Torah reading once a month and share in reading from *megilot* (scrolls) on various holidays. Women are responded to when saying the mourners's *kaddish*, and the *mechitza* curtain separating the men from the women is drawn back during *divrei Torah* and announcements. Growing out of its accomodations in the basement of the *Efrata School on the corner of Gad and Yehuda Streets, Baka, contact president Deborah Weissman at home (02) 721247.*

From the shul of Kehilat Kol Haneshama

Yakar, a New-Age influenced Orthodox shul (expanded from from the original in London, England), led by Rabbi Mickey Rosen, is a community of study as well as prayer. Their Women's Beit Midrash offers *chavruta* (small group) study of 2-3 women under the guidance of women scholars such as Osna Haberman, Deborah Weissman, Marcie Lank, Mimi Feigelson, Iris Felix, Judy Klitsner, and Leah Rosenthal. and teaching on other occasions by Gilla Rosen and Avivah Zornberg. A library is open to the public for study and tea and coffee, evenings from 6-10. On Shabbat mornings (following *shacharit* and *kiddush*, before the Torah reading) two divrei Torah are given, one in English. *Rechov Halamed Hey 10 ,phone (02) 612310 or 617460.*

Let us know if we missed a *shul* we should visit.

Songs for Our Voices: *Winning Entries in the Sixth Annual Anna Davidson Rosenberg Award for Poems on the Jewish Experience,* edited by Paula Naomi Friedman, is the first of an anticipated annual series from this international competition for unpublished poetry. $10.95. (CA add $.74 sales tax). *Magnes Museum, 2911 Russell Street, Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 549-6950.*

Kavod: a gay-sensitive counseling and education program meets the needs of bisexuals, gay men and women, with outreach to Jewish clients, and their families. Support groups on: coming out, parents of gays and lesbians and Jewish gay identity. *Karen Belford, Jewish Family Service of Santa Clara County, 14855 Oka Road, #18, Los Gatos, CA 95030 (408) 398-2202.*

A Workshop for Jewish Parents of Gay and Lesbian Children offers help in coming to terms with "coming out." Parents, adult children, a therapist, and a rabbi share insights about having or being gay children. A series of programs offered by the *Jewish Community Center of the Upper West Side, 180 West 80th St., #218, New York, NY 10024 (212) 580-0299.*

How to discuss conversion to Judaism is free brochure by Dr. Lawrence J. Epstein for people who want to ask someone to consider becoming Jewish. *Suffolk Jewish Communal Planning Council, 74 Hauppaugue Rd.,#53, Commack, NY 11725, (516) 462-5826.*

The Chain of Life: A Curricular Guide about Death, Bereavement and the Jewish Way of Honoring the Dead is a joint publication of Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education and the Jewish Funeral Directors of America. It enables teachers to prepare children to deal with visiting the terminally ill in the hospital, what to do upon hearing of a death, funeral traditions and coping with death. The guide was written by Susan Arlen, Ron Isaacs and Richard Wagner with a bibliography by Carolyn Starman Hessel. $5.00 from *JFDA 399 E. 72 St. #3F, New York, NY 10021 (212) 628-3465.*

The Return of the Goddess 1994 engagement calendar, with multicultural contemporary and ancient illustrations of women as sacred, is $17.95 plus $2 postage. *Hands of the Goddess Press, 19 Kettle Hill Rd., RFD 3, Amherst, MA 01002 (413) 548-9572.*

Of A Like Mind is a quarterly newspaper, published since 1983, containing articles on women's spirituality, Goddesses, ritual, women's religion, witchcraft, feminist spirituality, healing , magic, wicca, priestessing, shamanism, nature religions, tarot, psychic development, spiritual politics, divination, women's theology and astrology. Sample copy $4.00; subscriptions $13-$33 (sliding fee scale). *OALM, Box 6021, Madision WI 43716 (608) 255-5092.*

Women in Black (and women for peace) will hold an international conference in December 1994. Send proposals for presentations, workshops, and panels to Women in Black Conference, P.O. Box 6360, Jerusalem 91062,

Women in Black plan to continue their vigil until the occupation is over. Their slogan, held up by Hagar Roublev, says: "Yes to Peace!"

The March of the Living is recruiting 11th and 12th graders of all Jewish denominations and educational backgrounds to join 5000 Jewish teens from over 40 countries who will visit the sites of Jewish history in Poland and Israel on April 4-18, 1994. Cost is $2850; some scholarships are available. *Susan Rachlin, Board of Jewish Education , 426 West 58th St. New York, NY 10019 (212) 245-8200 x311.*

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Aleph: Alliance for Jewish Renewal a merging of the *P'nai Or* Religious Fellowship and the Shalom Center, combining a network of havurah-style communities, a retreat center, and a myriad of spirituality and social action programs that reach disaffected and unaffiliated Jews. *ALEPH, 7318 Germantown Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19119-1793 (215)242-4074.*

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When we have your material on file, we will be able to use it in answering queries we receive from the press, from conference planners in the Jewish community, and from other nonprofit organizations

Underwritten in part by the Nathan Cummings Foundation, Lilith's Talent Bank is not a speakers bureau; it is a resource for the Jewish community, for nonprofit organizations and for the media

Please fill in all applicable information. You are welcome to photocopy the form and to pass it along to others. If you would like to suggest a woman for inclusion in LILITH's talent bank who is too modest, or too well known, to nominate herself, please send us her name and address with pertinent information. If you have heard a compelling speaker or know of any especially knowledgeable resource person, please recommend her

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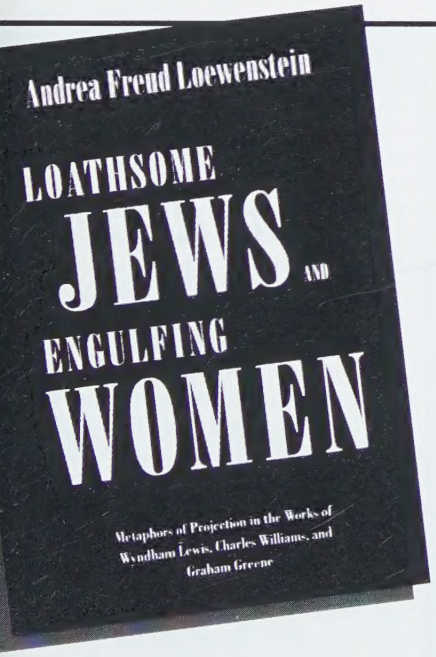

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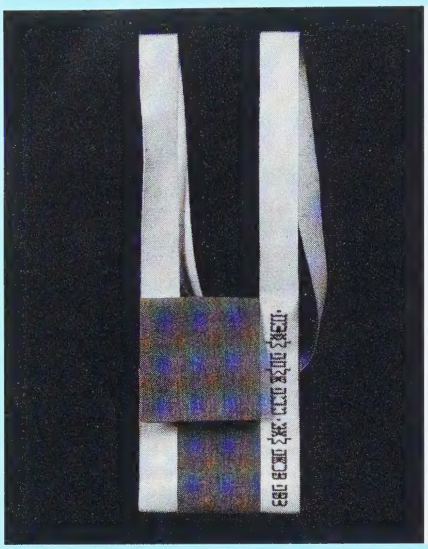

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From the Archives of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

TSHOLNT
A Taste of Another World
by Jeffrey Shandler

This picture shows a group of Jewish women, accompanied by a few children, bringing pots of tsholnt to the local bakery. *Tsholnt* (also known as *cholent*) is the traditional Ashkenazic stew, variously made of meat, beans, barley and vegetables, prepared on Friday afternoons for consumption on Saturday afternoon. The word *tsholnt* is a treasured linguistic landmark of Yiddish—one of the few words in the modern language that can be traced back to the medieval romance languages spoken by the first Jews to migrate east and settle in towns along the Rhine River, where Yiddish was born over a thousand years ago.

The tradition of making *tsholnt* is a distinctive Ashkenazic variation of a long-standing Jewish practice—maintaining the prohibition against making fires or cooking on the Sabbath on the one hand, while having warm, substantial food to eat on the other hand. The *tsholnt* pots in this picture were placed in the baker's large oven; its walls retained enough heat from a week of steady use to keep these pots warm from Friday afternoon until the main meal on the Sabbath.

Shabes nokhn tsholnt—that time on Saturday afternoons after eating this meal—is a distinctive moment in the weekly calendar of traditional Ashkenazic life, when observant Jews were briefly free both from work and from ritual duties. In turn-of-the-century Yiddish fiction it is frequently evoked—sometimes as a time of unique peace and contentment in the traditional Jew's routine, other times as the epitome of the stultifying existence of provincial East European Jewry.

This photograph, taken in Bialystok, Poland, appeared in the *kunst-baylage*, or rotogravure section, of the *Jewish Daily Forward* on November 20, 1932. Like many of the pictures of Jewish life in Poland that appeared in America's most popular Yiddish newspaper during the interwar years, it afforded readers a vicarious trip back to their Old World homes. This constituted an imaginary journey not only across space but also through time, taking immigrant readers back to their childhood years, to an Old World understood as frozen in time.

The *Forward*'s implicit message that this way of life was "backward" and "provincial" is underscored by the contrast between this photograph and the others that appeared with it on this page, including portraits of actors and actresses of the New York Yiddish Stage, a shot of an outdoor art exhibition in Greenwich Village, and a picture of "Miss Mary Wiechelman of Cincinnati, Ohio, who was selected as the country's ideal secretary at the annual meeting of the Iota National Business Society."

The photograph was clearly posed for the camera. Rather than offering us an image that captures candidly a ritual activity in process, it offers a portrait of a group of Polish Jewish women bearing the attributes of a traditional life practiced communally. Notions of domestic life certainly vary from one Jewish culture to another! In the same November 20th issue of the *Forward*, its "New World" female readers were encouraged in *Di froyen-velt*, its "women's page," to pursue a modern, American middle-class ideal vision of life at home. Both advertisement and features "sell" the idea of a ideal woman as married (of course) and free from the obligation to work, thanks to her husband's full-time employment outside the home. She fully supervises her family's private life, not only preparing meals that are nourishing and tempting, but also maintaining a home environment that is clean, healthy, comfortable and tastefully appointed.

In the Jewish "Old World," boundaries of private and public activities and spaces were configured differently. The ability of these woman to carry their *tsholnt* pots home on the Sabbath (carrying objects outside the home is forbidden on the Sabbath) was achieved by legally transforming the street—normally an open, public place—into a private domain. This was accomplished by means of an *eyrev*—a wire, strung from one roof to another in a Jewish neighborhood, marking the area within its circumference as an enclosed space. As this picture demonstrates, feeding the family, part of a traditional East European Jewish woman's role in life, is both a private activity and a public ritual.

Jeffrey Shandler is a Ph.D. candidate in Yiddish Studies at Columbia University.

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